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Lin et al.

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(54) **METHOD OF USING A POLISHING SYSTEM**

(71) Applicant: **TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING COMPANY, LTD.**, Hsinchu (TW)

(72) Inventors: **Shih-Chi Lin**, Hsinchu (TW); **Kun-Tai Wu**, Hsinchu (TW); **You-Hua Chou**, Hsinchu (TW); **Chih-Tsung Lee**, Hsinchu (TW); **Min Hao Hong**, Kaohsiung (TW); **Chih-Jen Wu**, Chu-Dong Town (TW); **Chen-Ming Huang**, Hsinchu (TW); **Soon-Kang Huang**, Hsinchu (TW); **Chin-Hsiang Chang**, New Taipei (TW); **Chih-Yuan Yang**, Hsinchu (TW)

(73) Assignee: **TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING COMPANY, LTD.**, Hsinchu (TW)

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See application file for complete search history.

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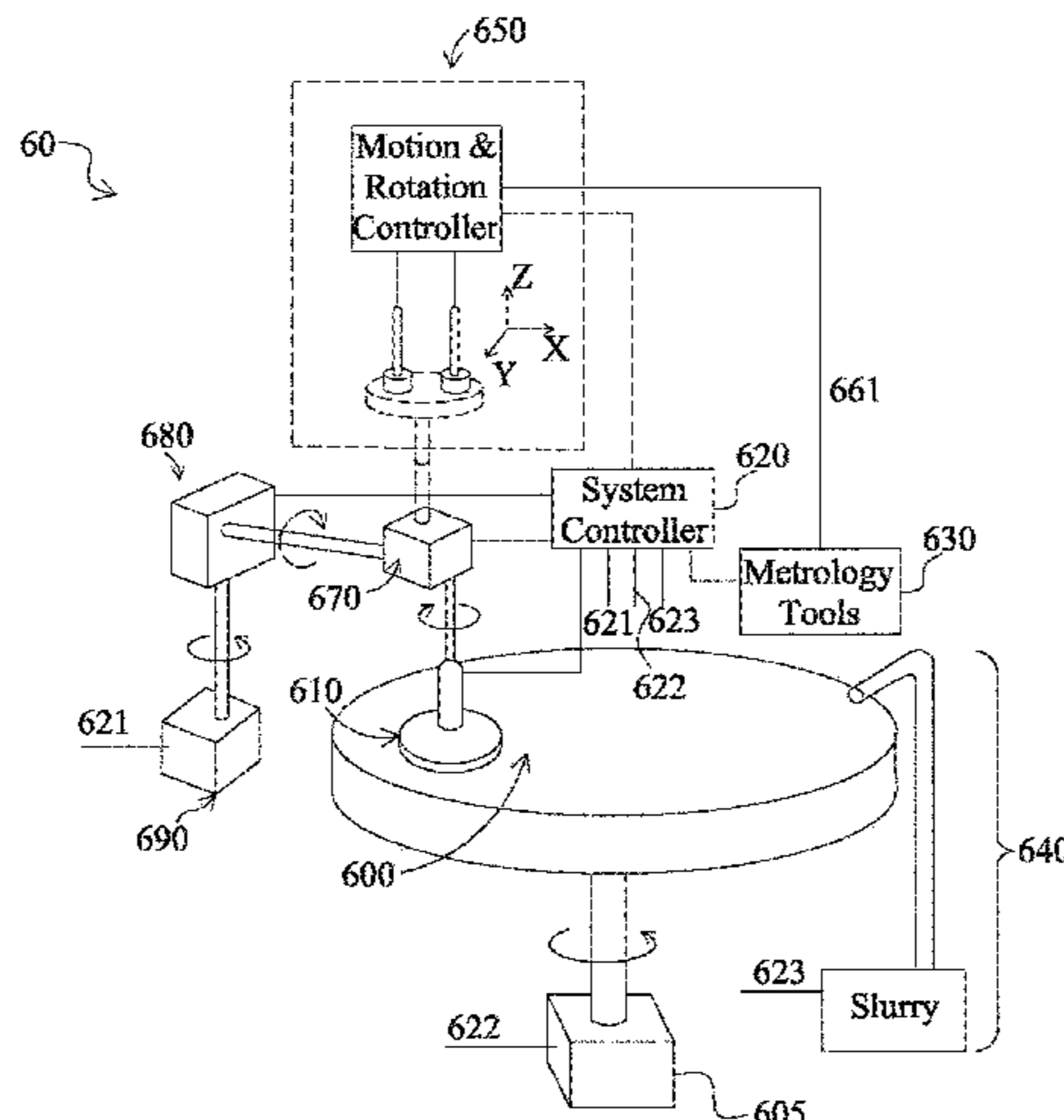
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Primary Examiner — Joseph J Hail
Assistant Examiner — J Stephen Taylor

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Hauptman Ham, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of using a polishing system includes securing a wafer to a support, wherein the wafer has a first diameter. The method further includes polishing the wafer using a first polishing pad rotating about a first axis, wherein the first polishing pad has a second diameter greater than the first diameter. The method further includes rotating the support about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis after polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad. The method further includes polishing the wafer using a second polishing pad after rotating the support, wherein the second polishing (Continued)



pad has a third diameter less than the first diameter. The method further includes releasing the wafer from the support following polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad.

20 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets

Related U.S. Application Data

division of application No. 13/706,506, filed on Dec. 6, 2012, now Pat. No. 9,718,164.

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H01L 21/673 (2006.01)
H01L 21/677 (2006.01)
H01L 21/66 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC *H01L 21/673* (2013.01); *H01L 21/67703* (2013.01); *H01L 22/26* (2013.01); *H01L 2924/0002* (2013.01)

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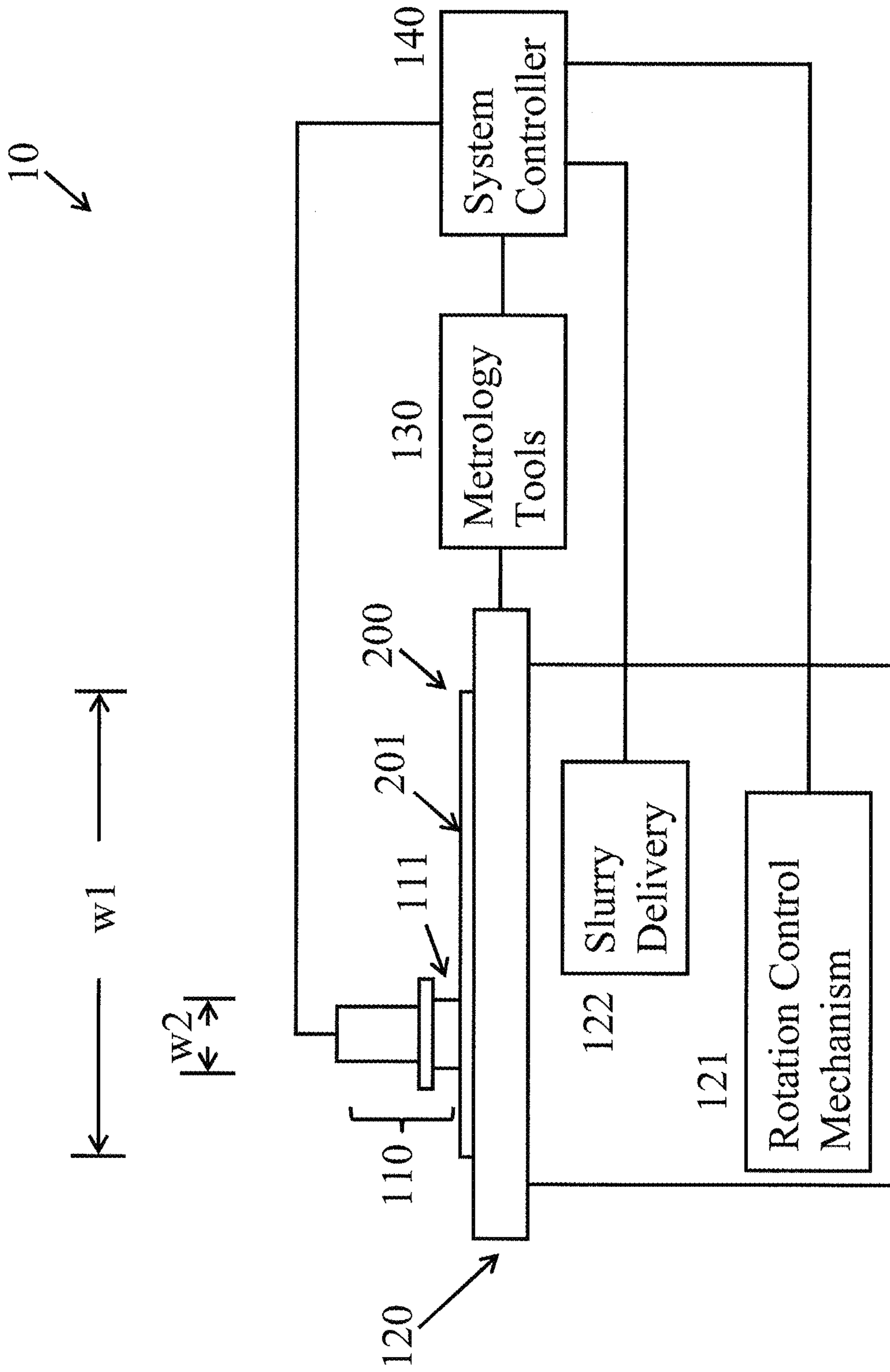


Figure 1

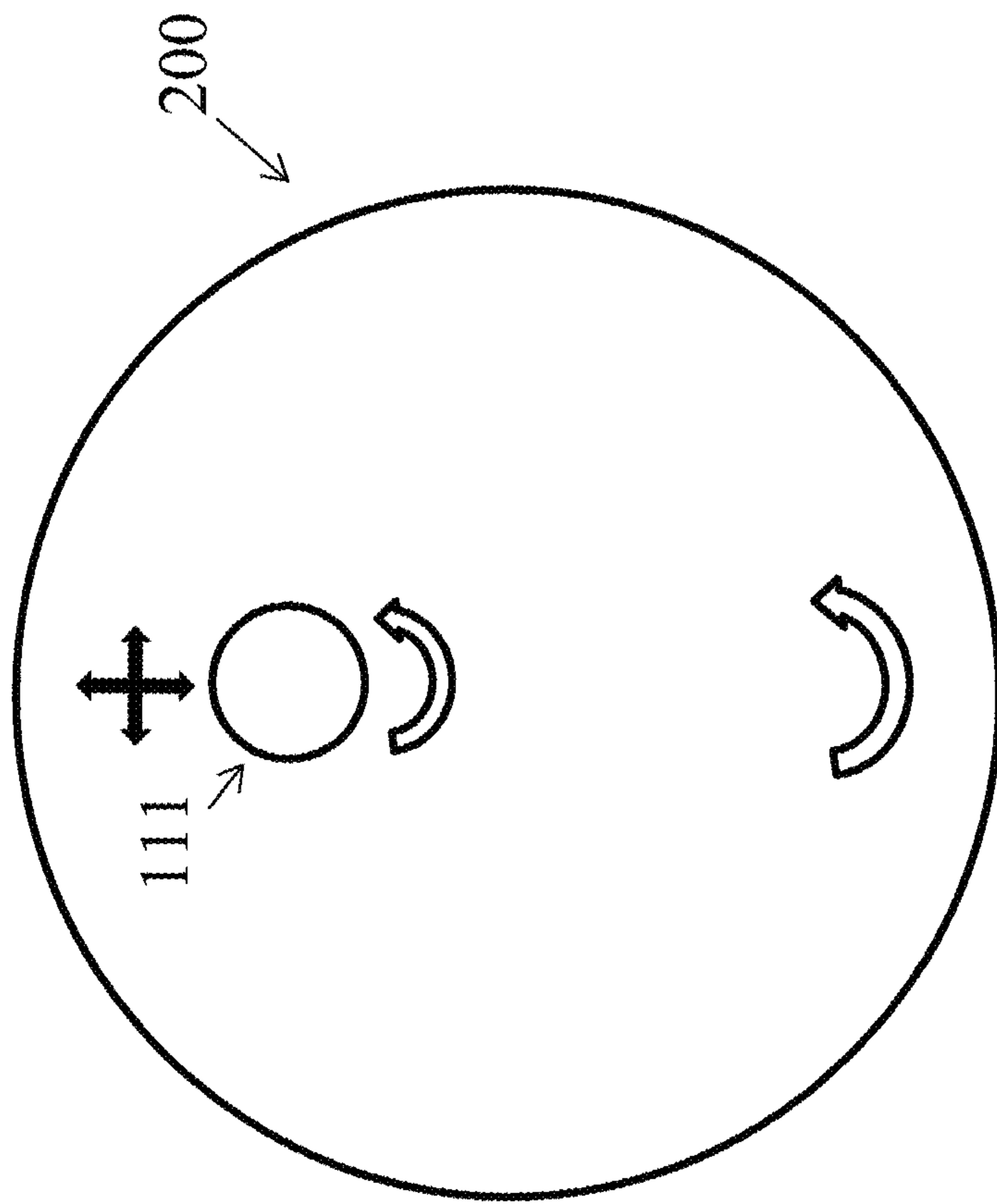


Figure 2

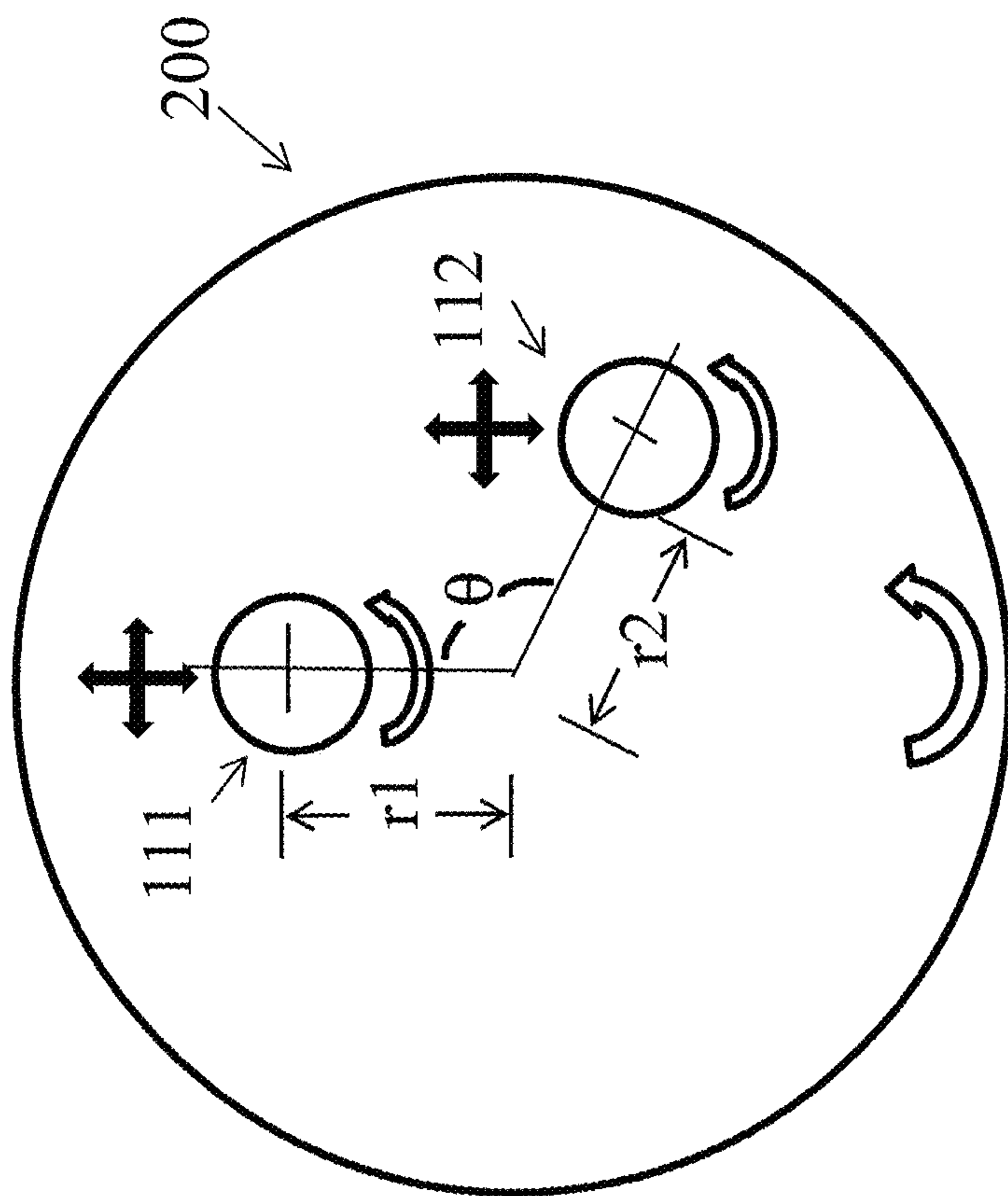


Figure 3B

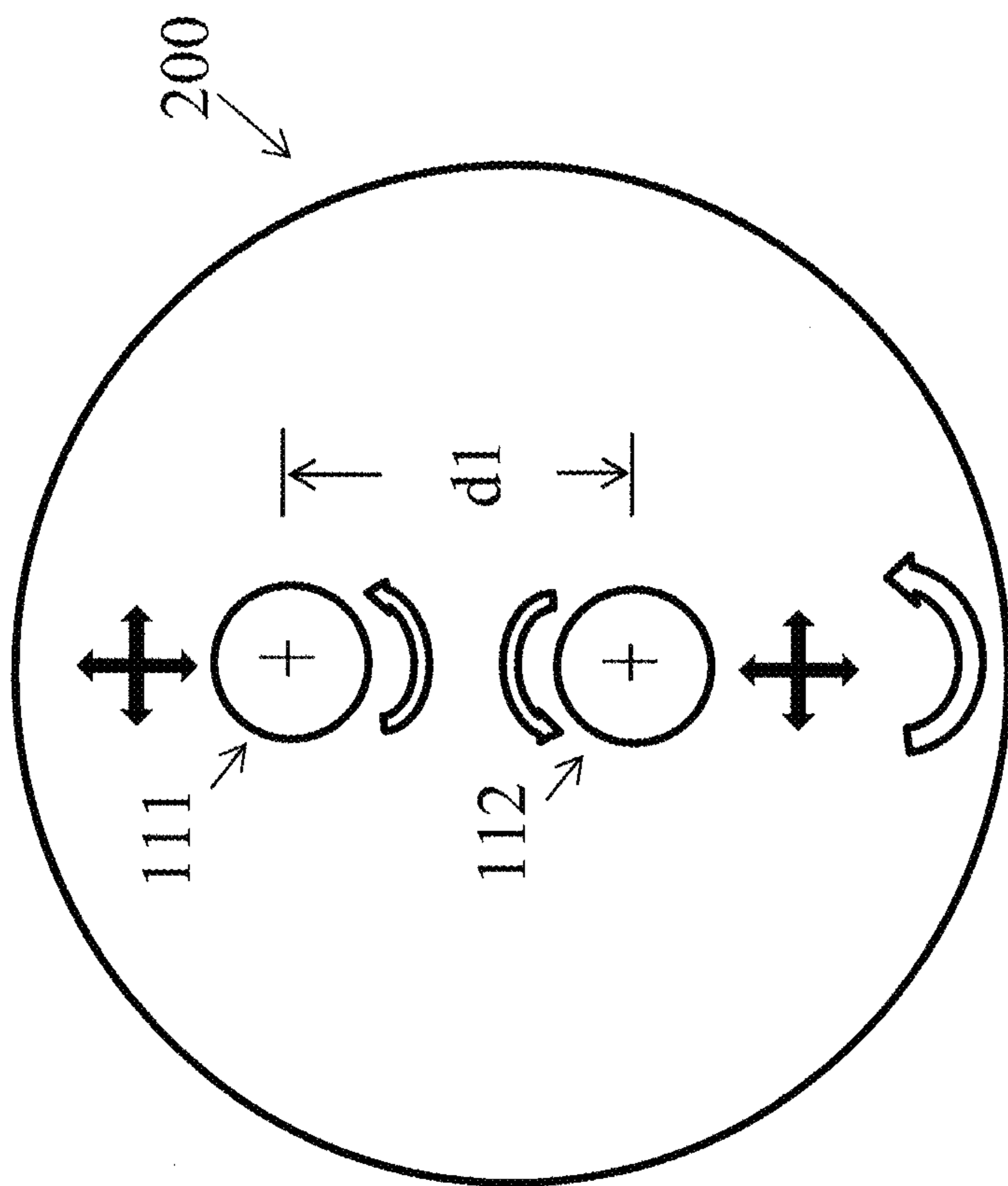


Figure 3A

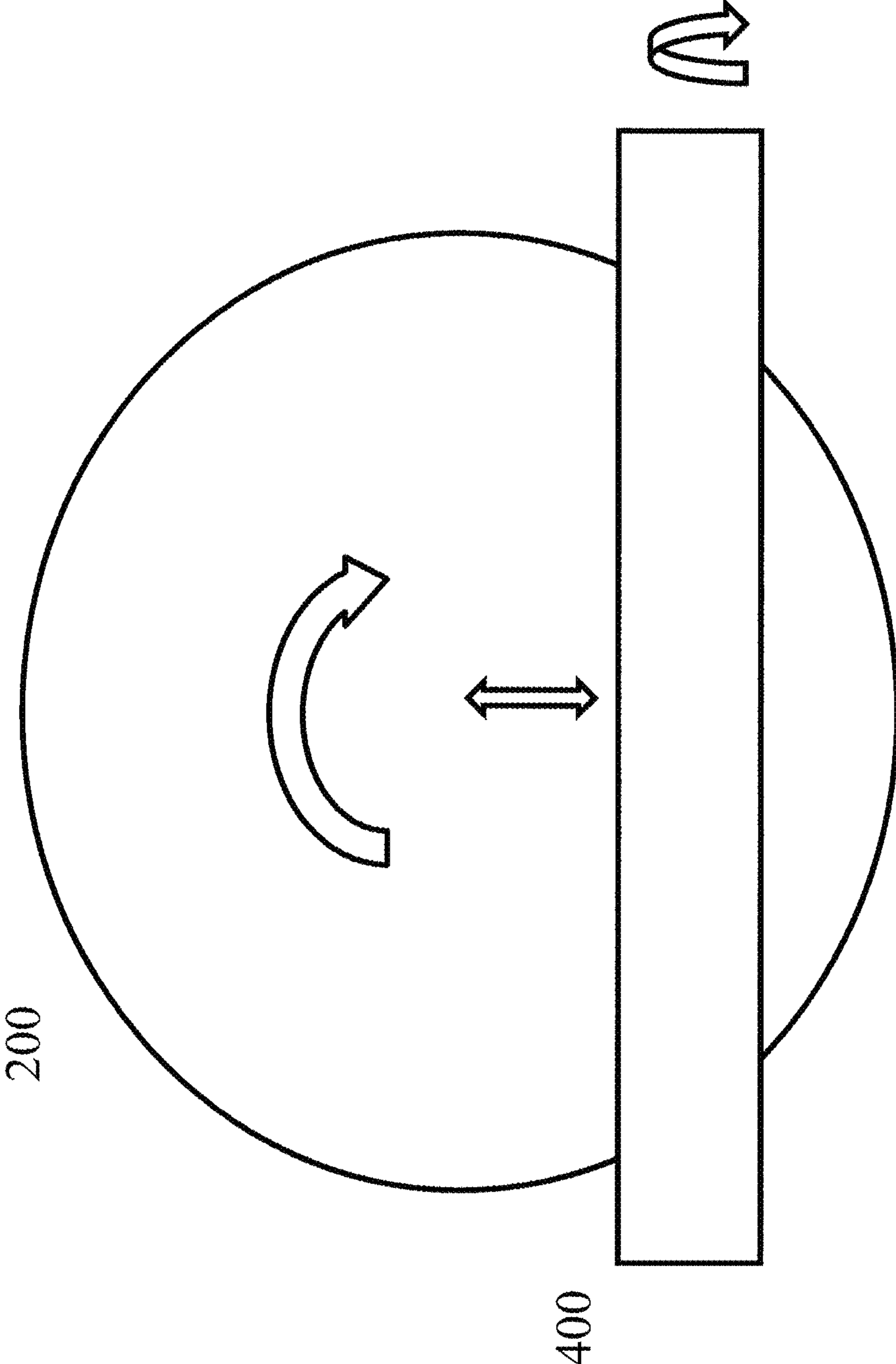
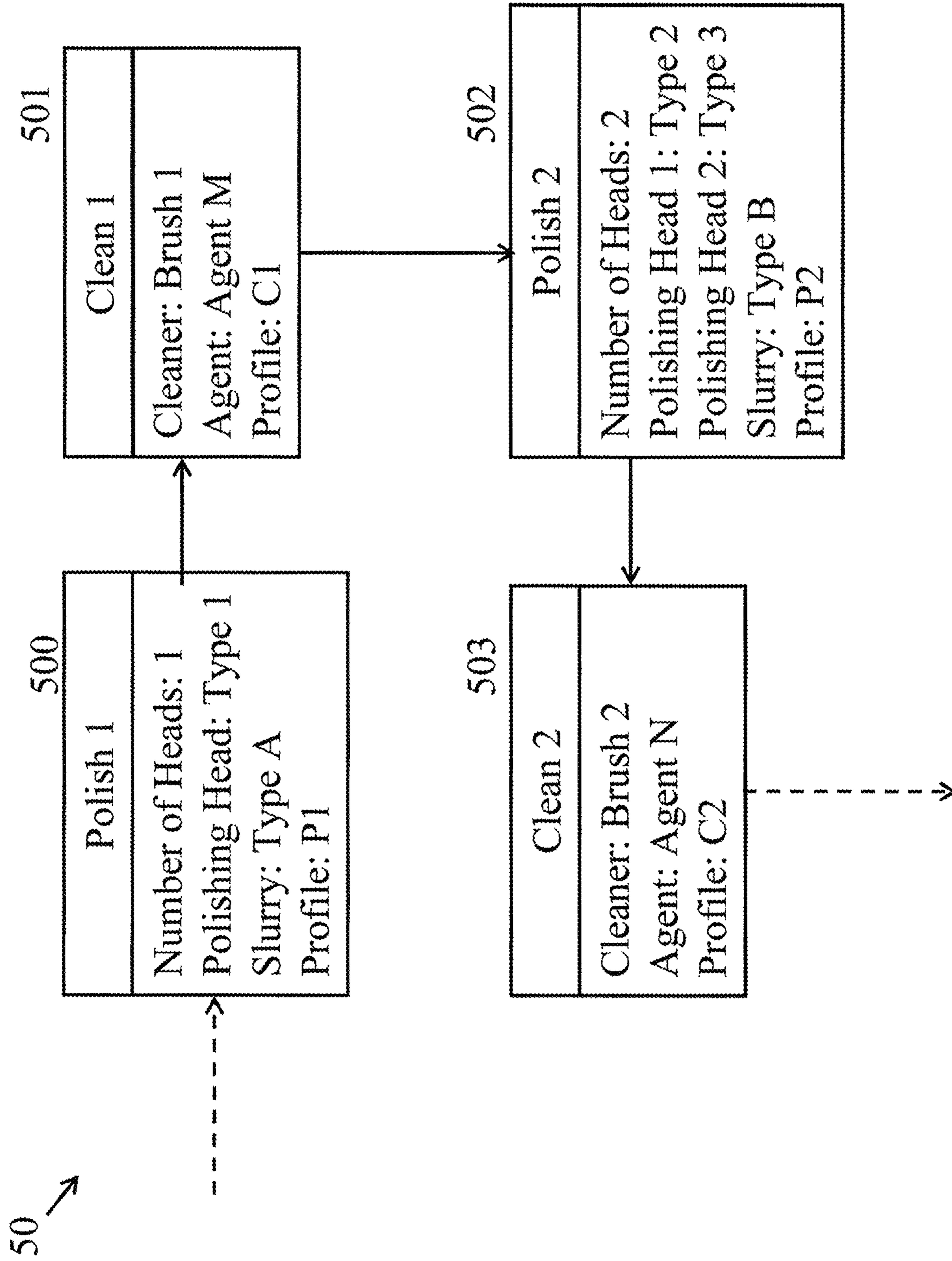


Figure 4



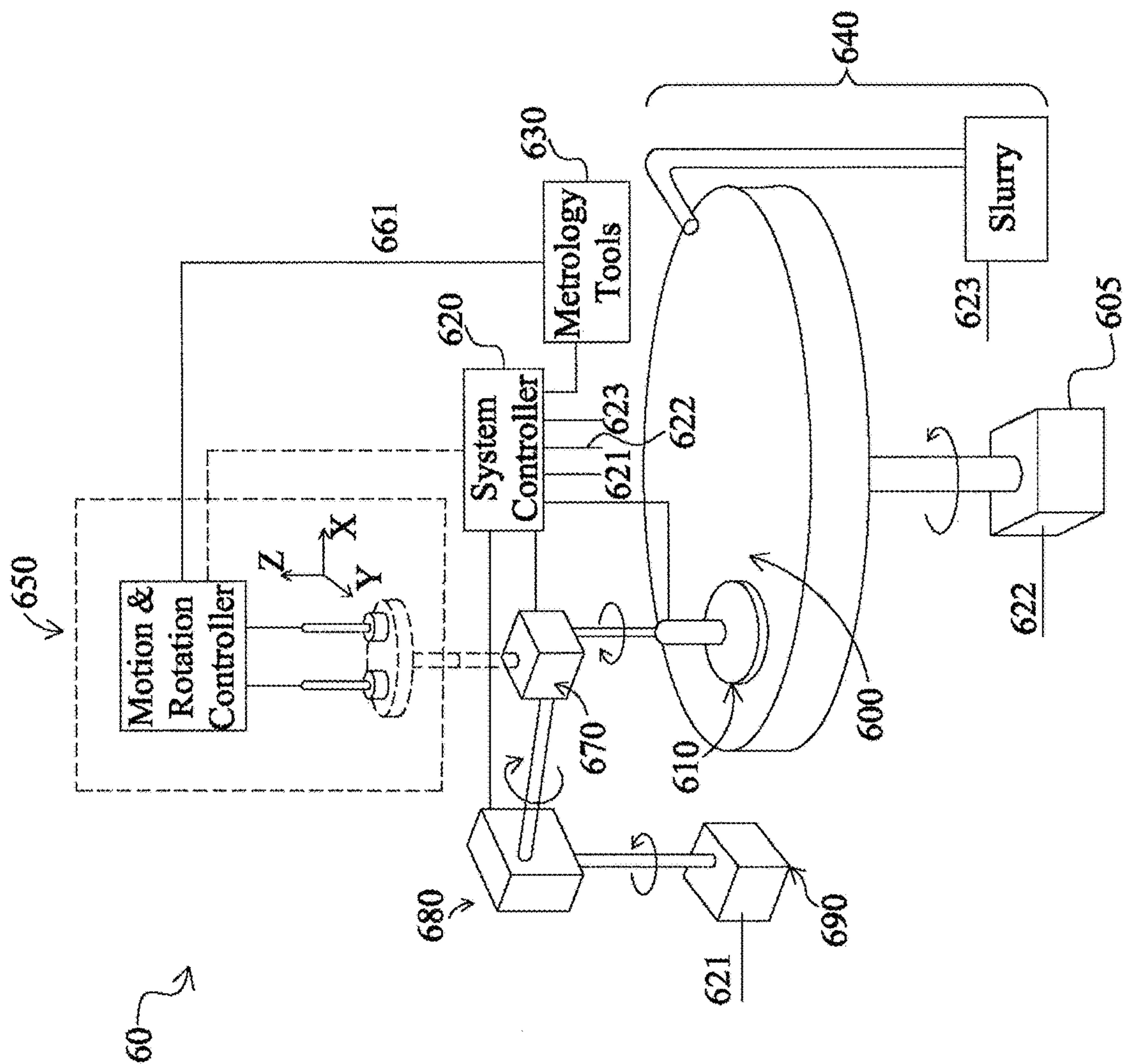


Figure 6

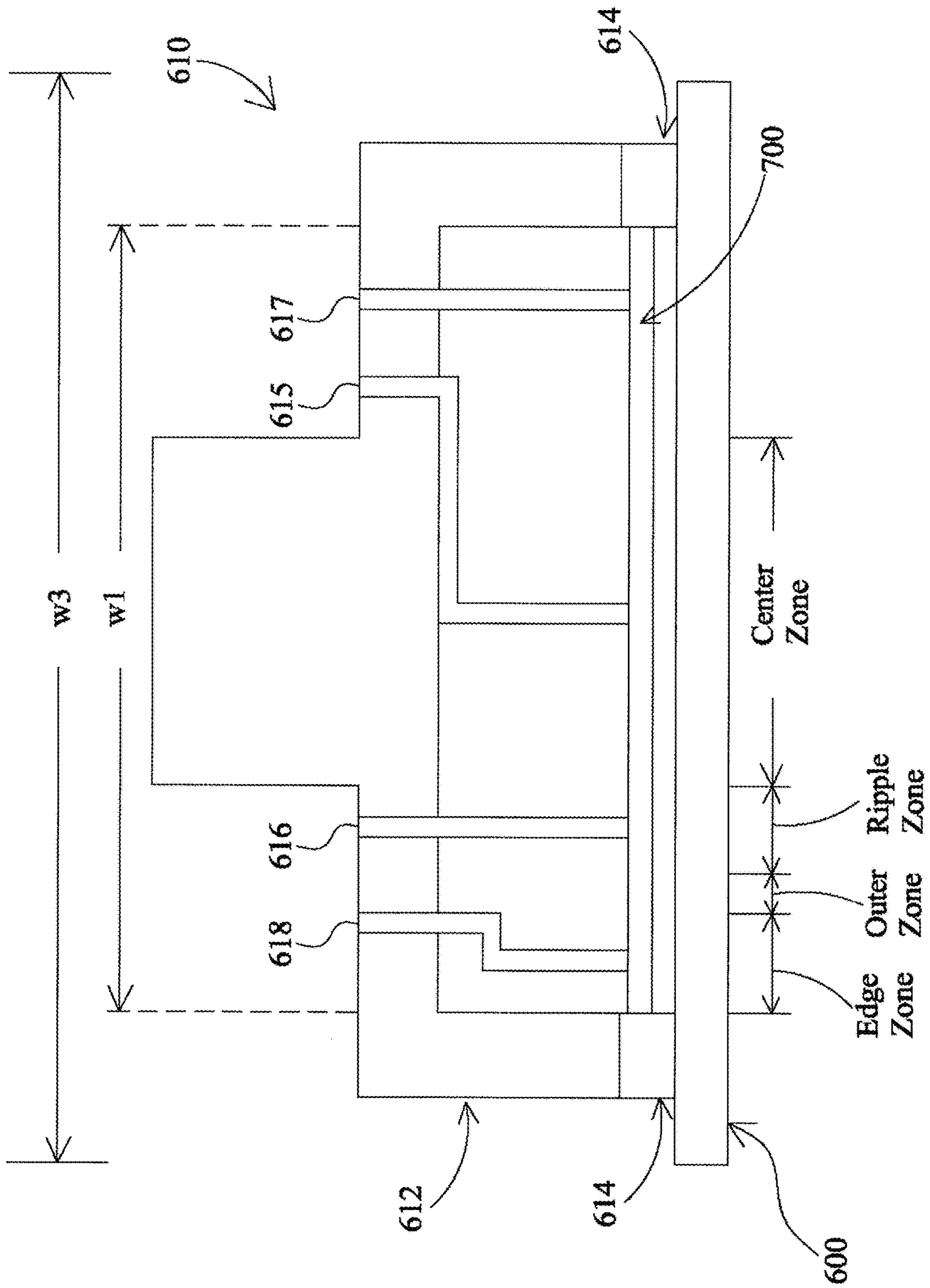


Figure 7

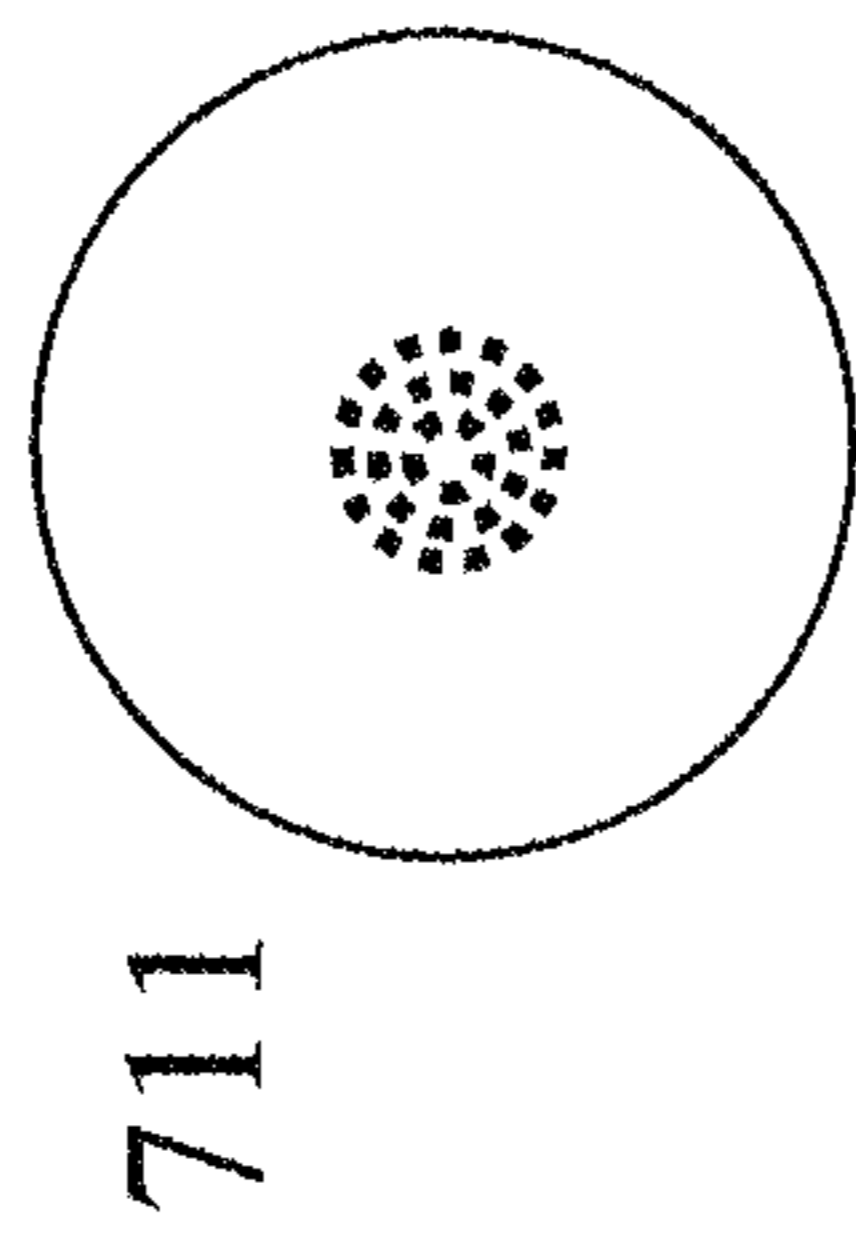


Figure 8

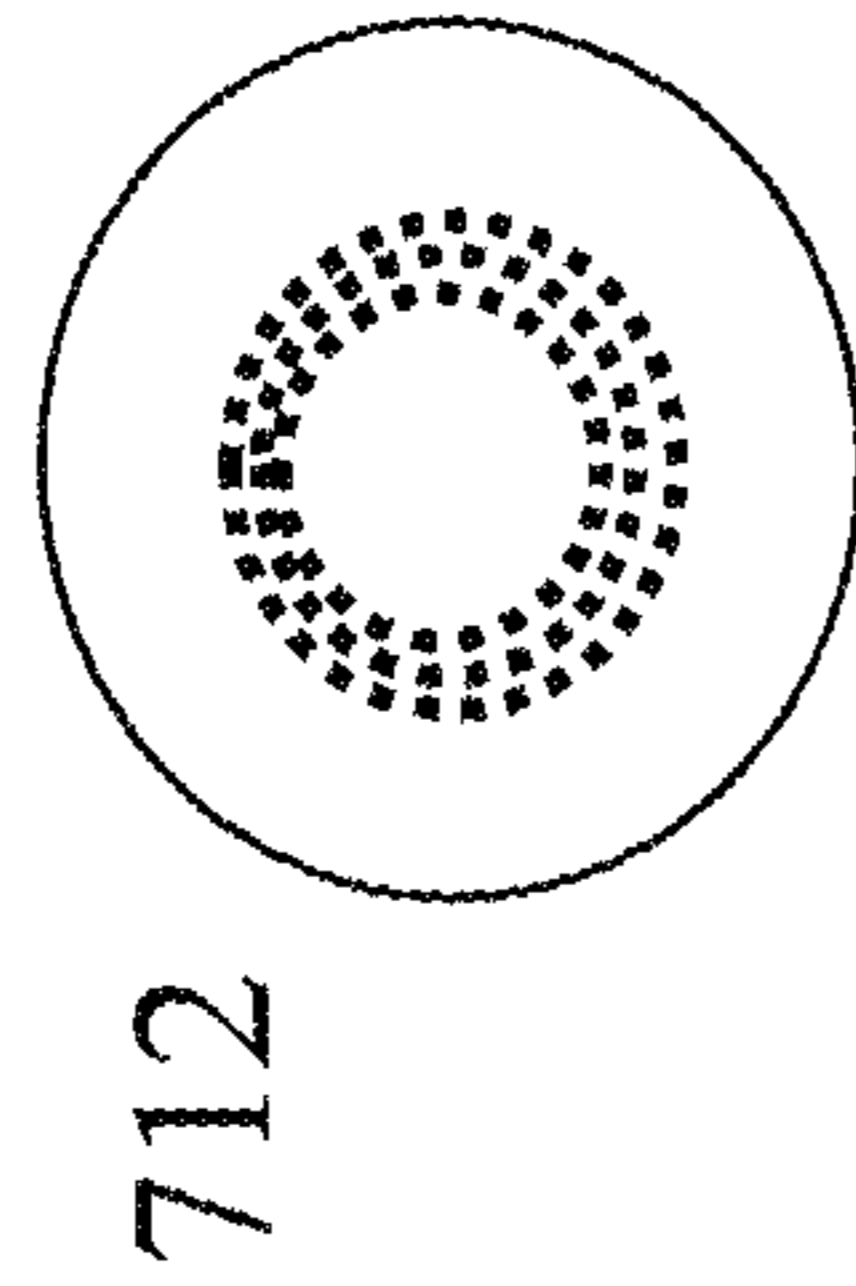


Figure 9

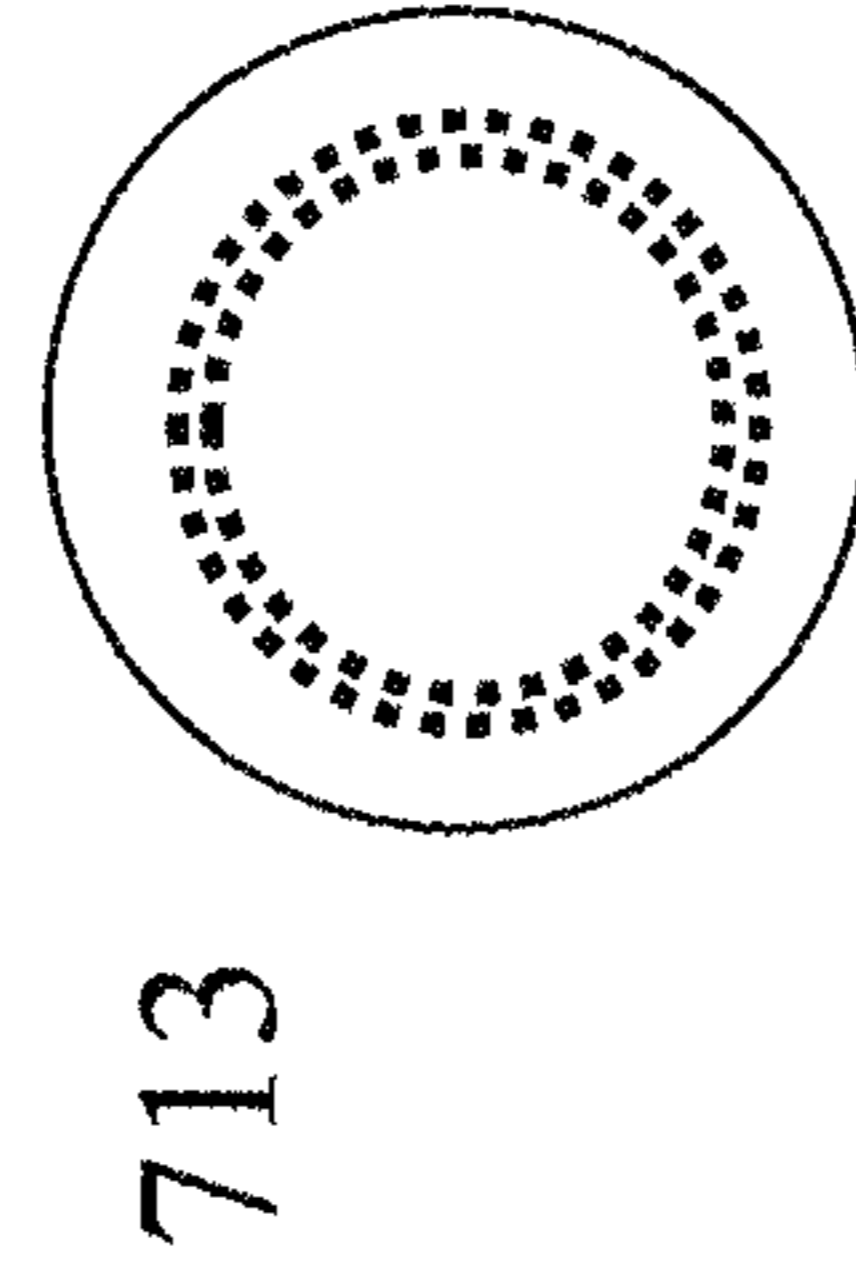


Figure 10

714

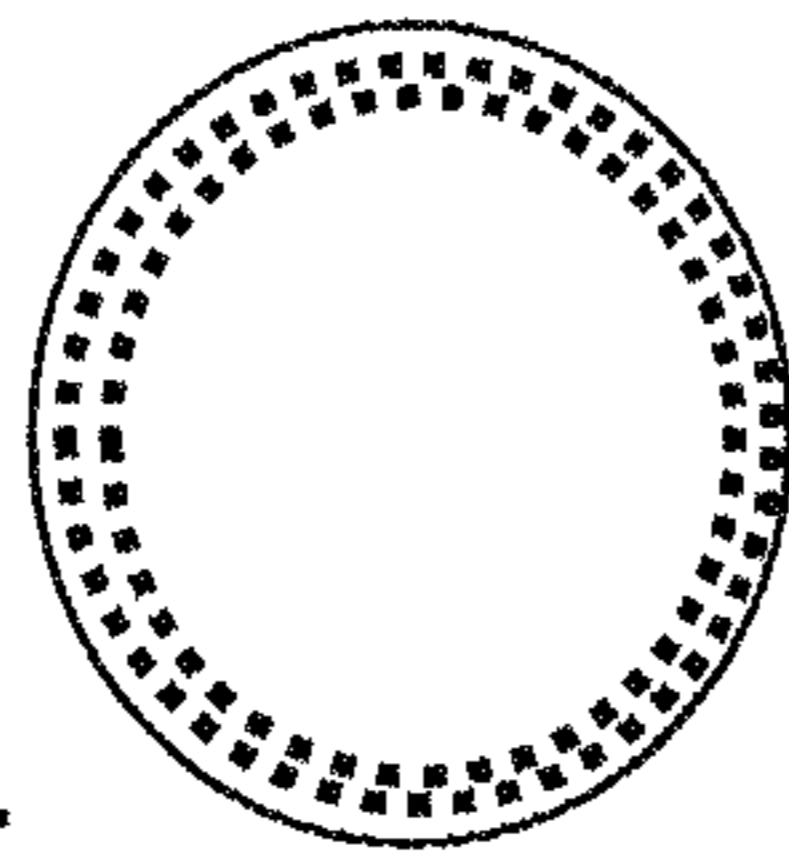


Figure 11

715

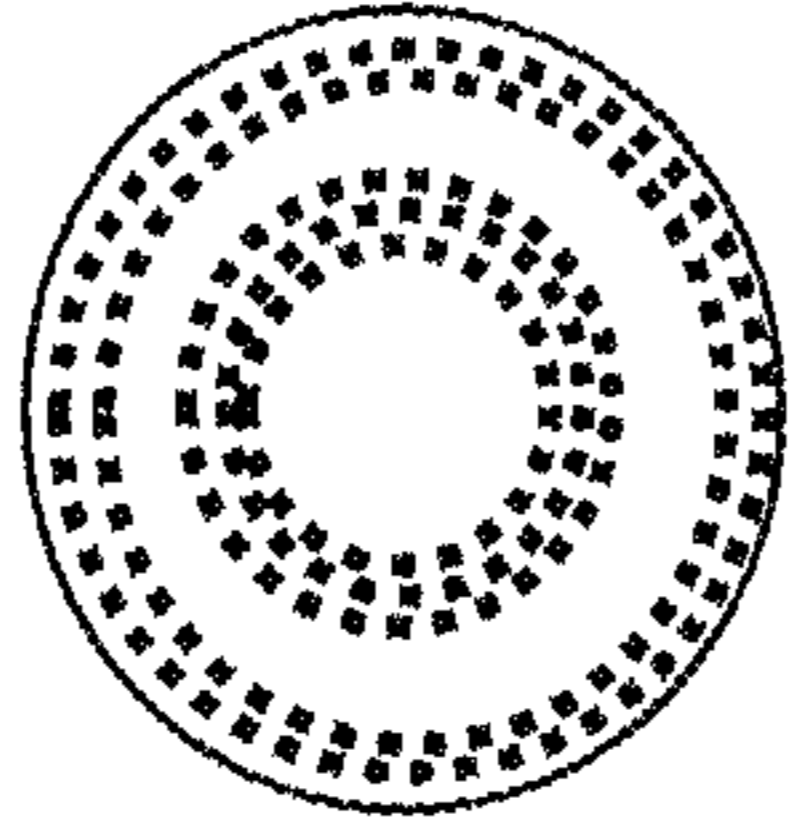


Figure 12

716

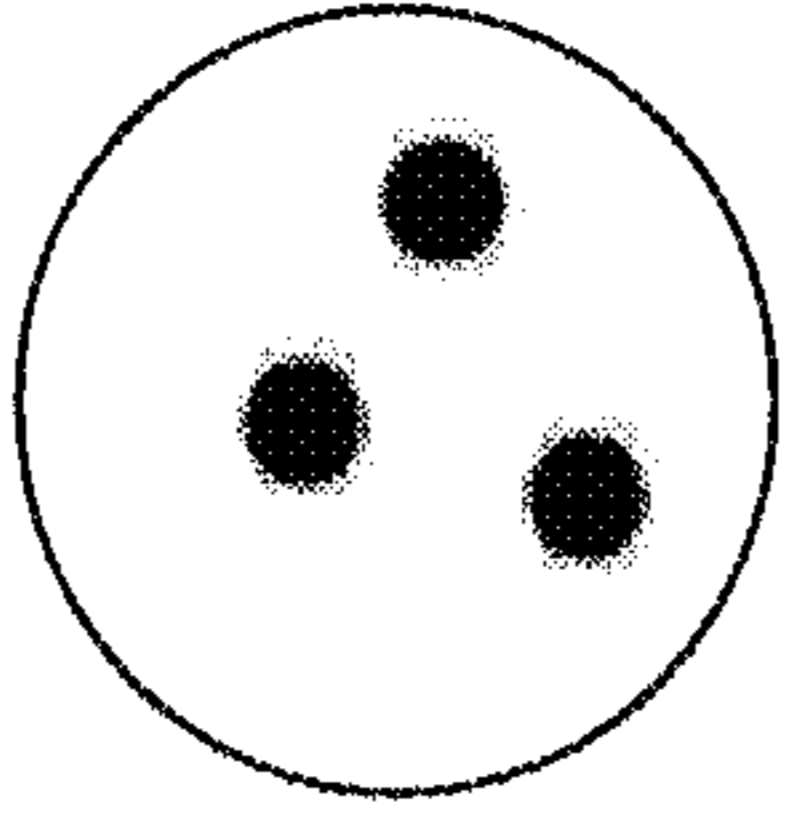


Figure 13

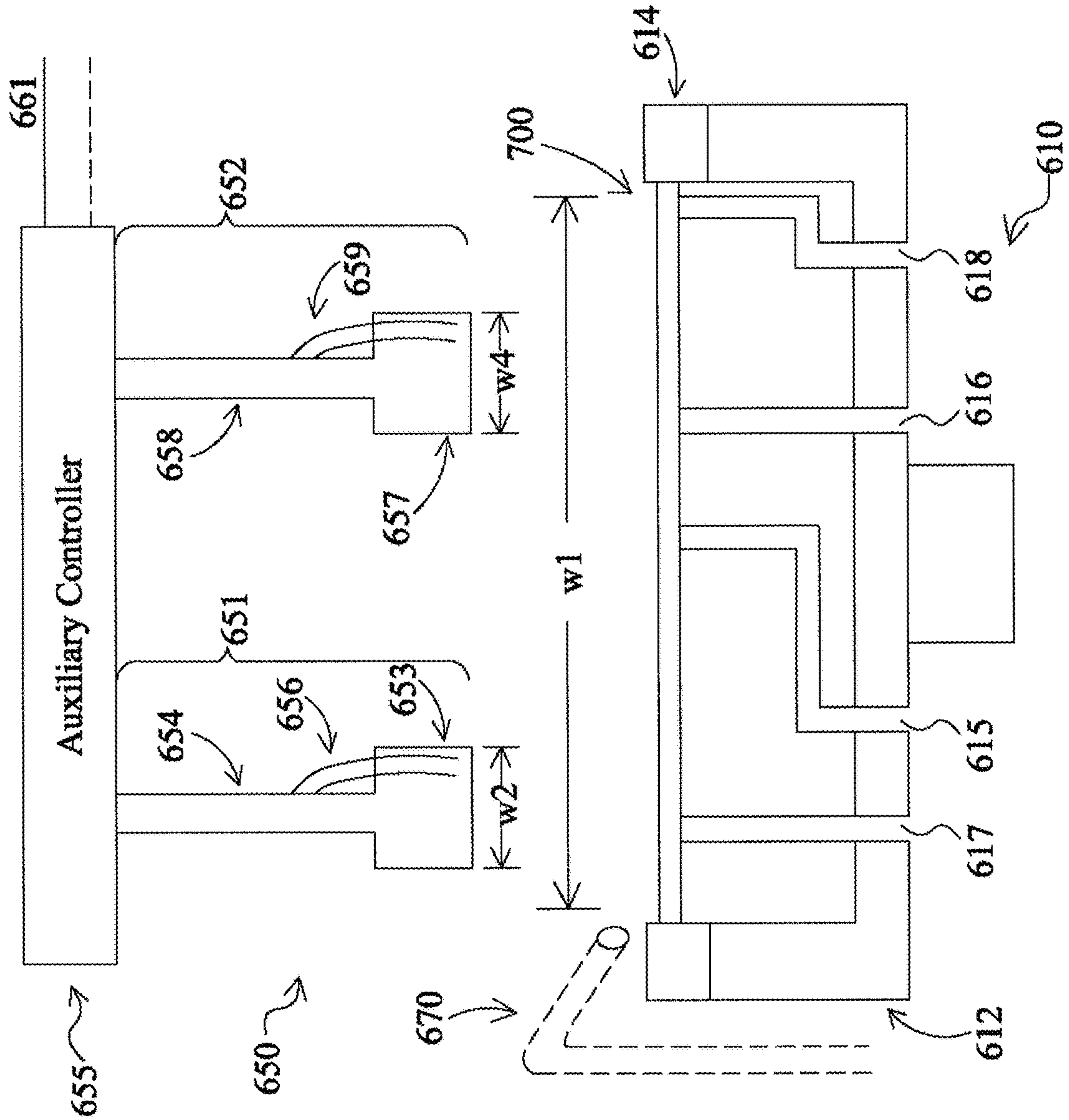


Figure 14

1500
↙

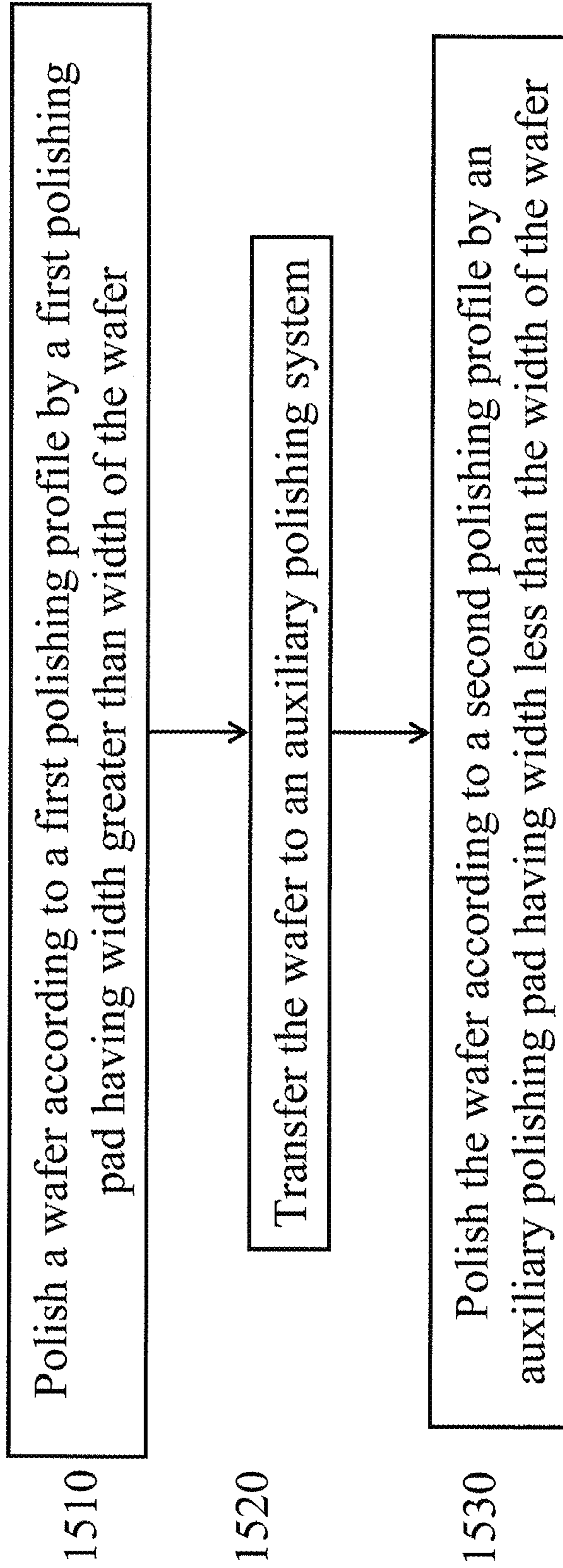


Figure 15

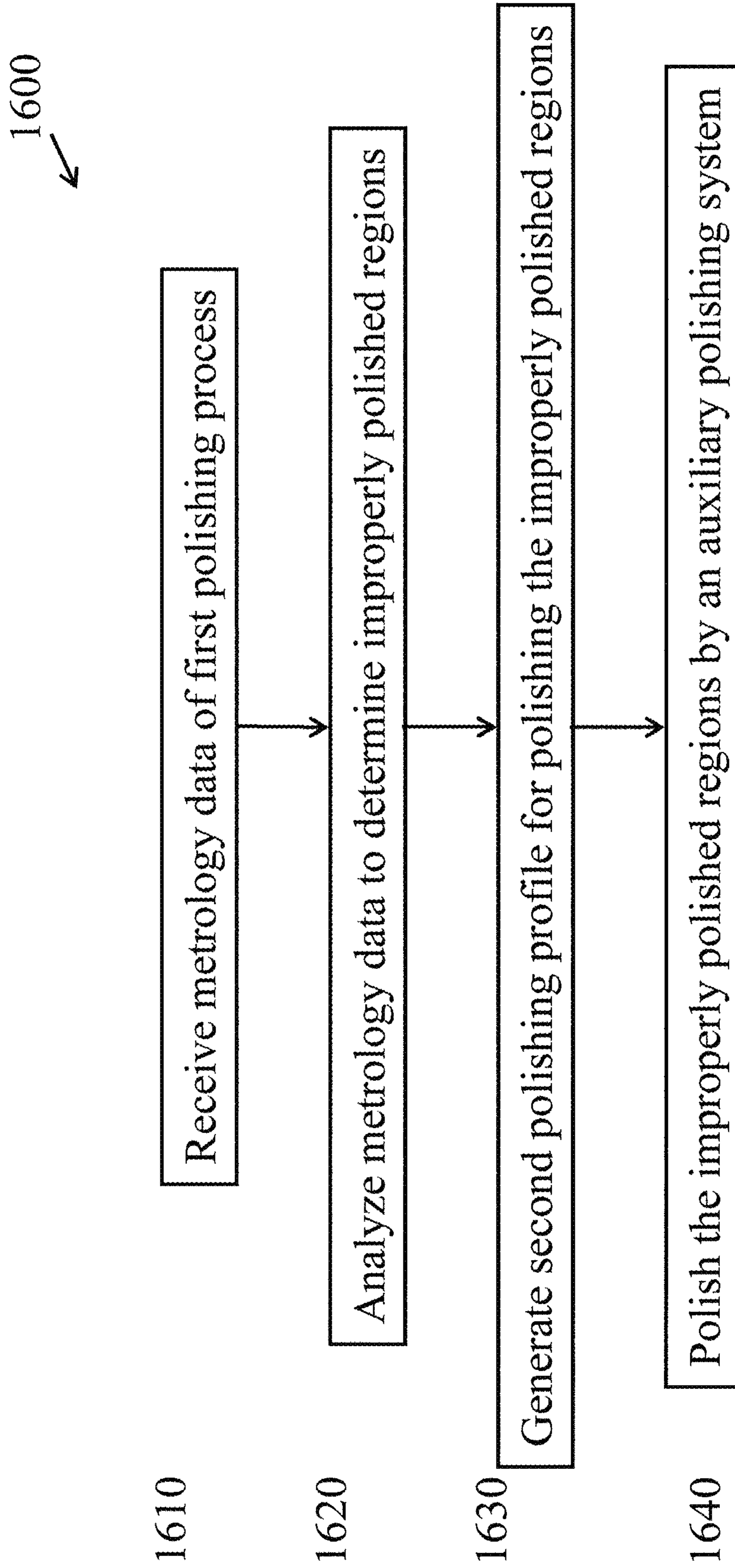


Figure 16

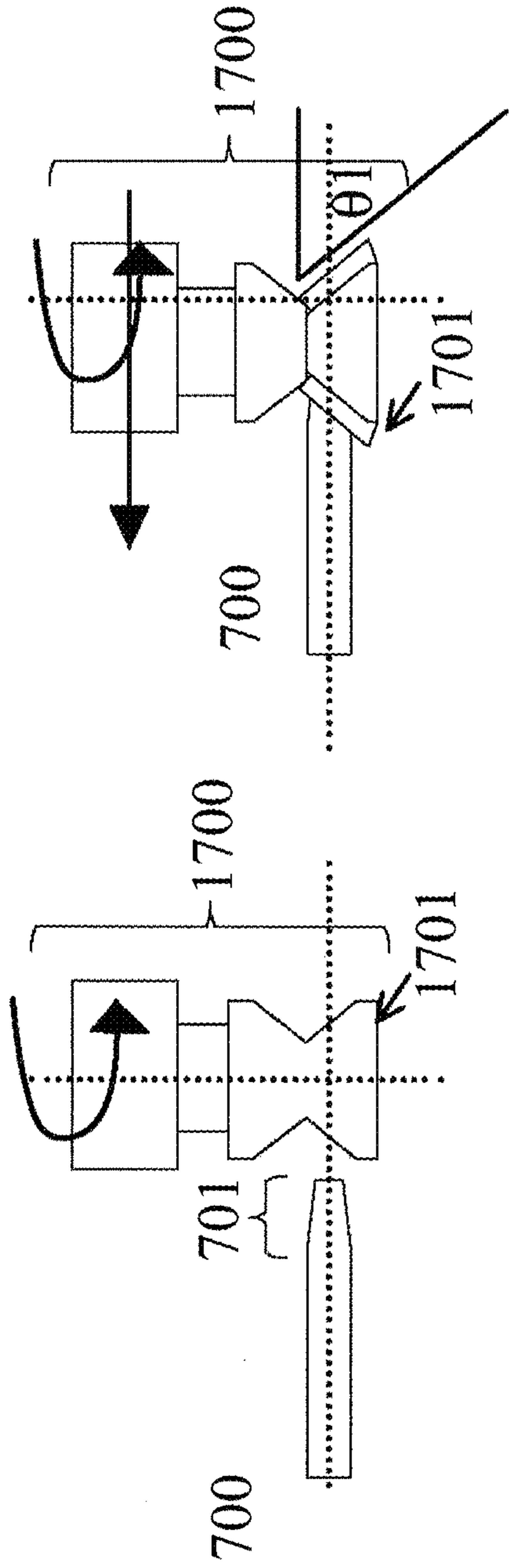


Figure 17

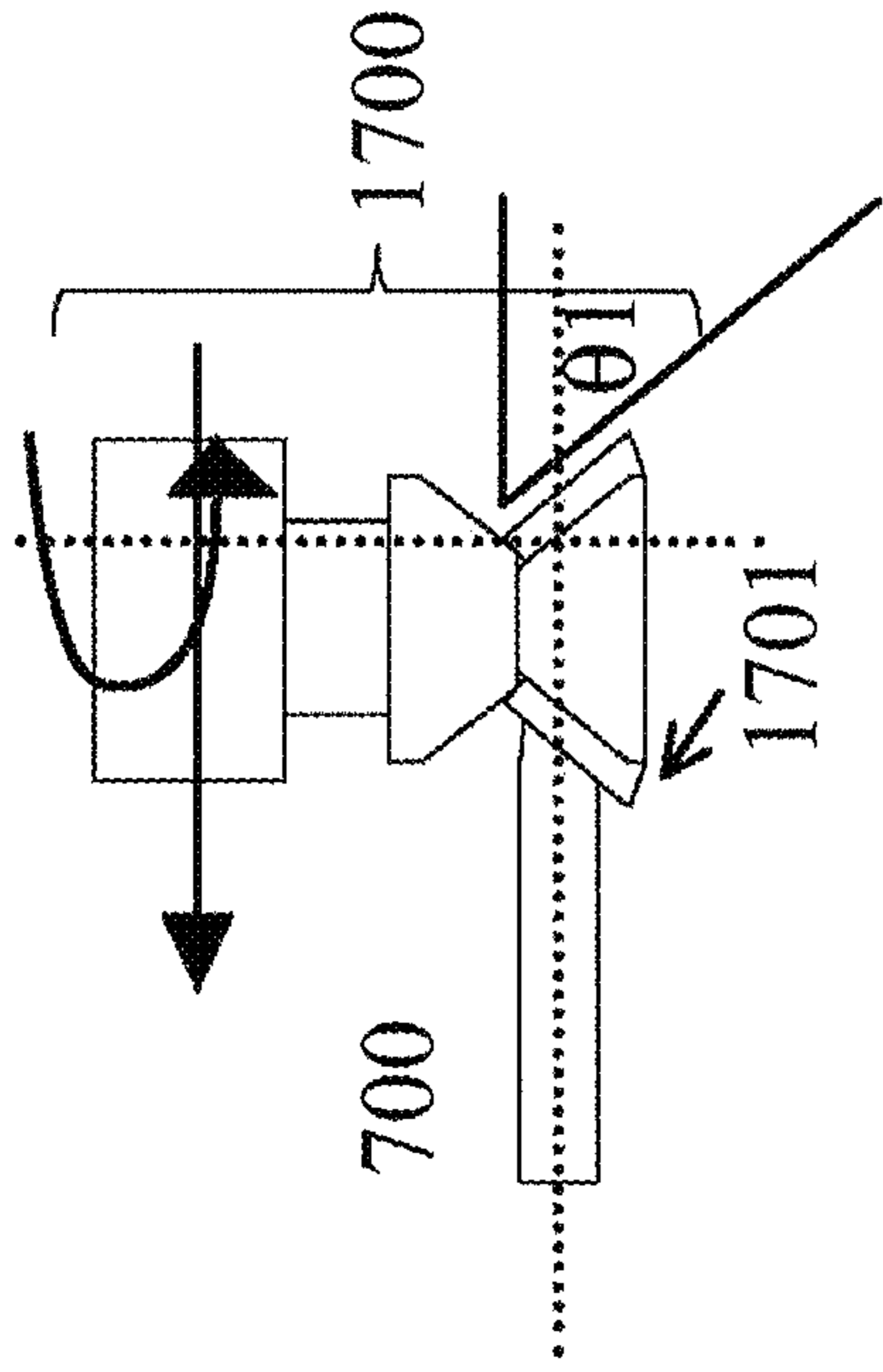


Figure 18

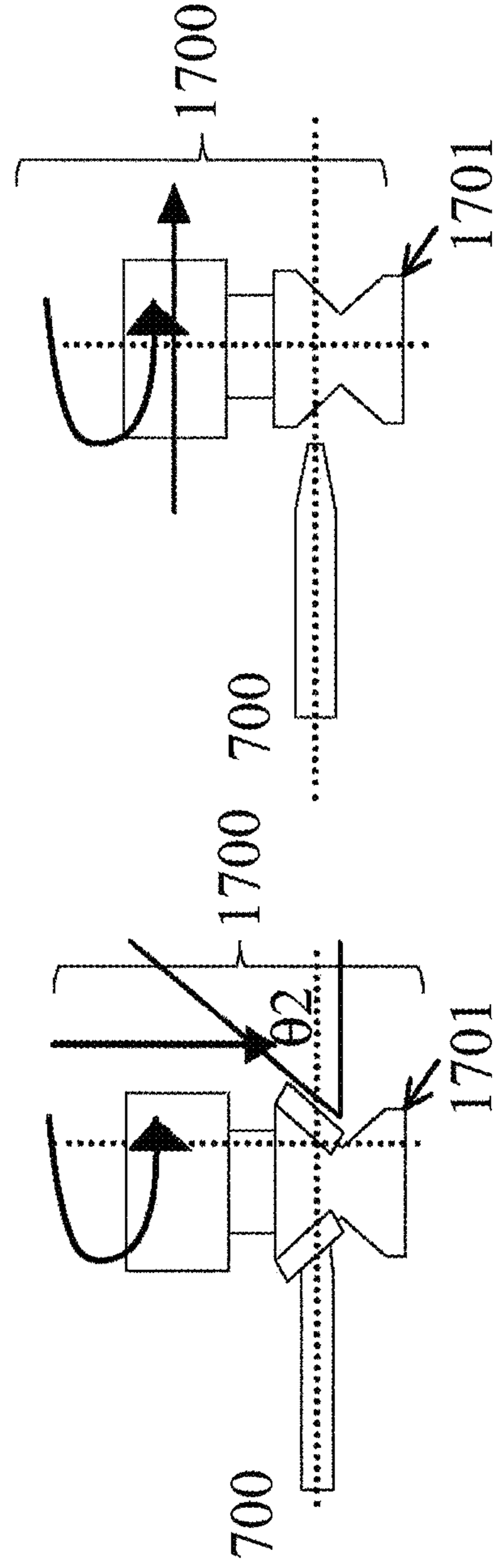


Figure 19

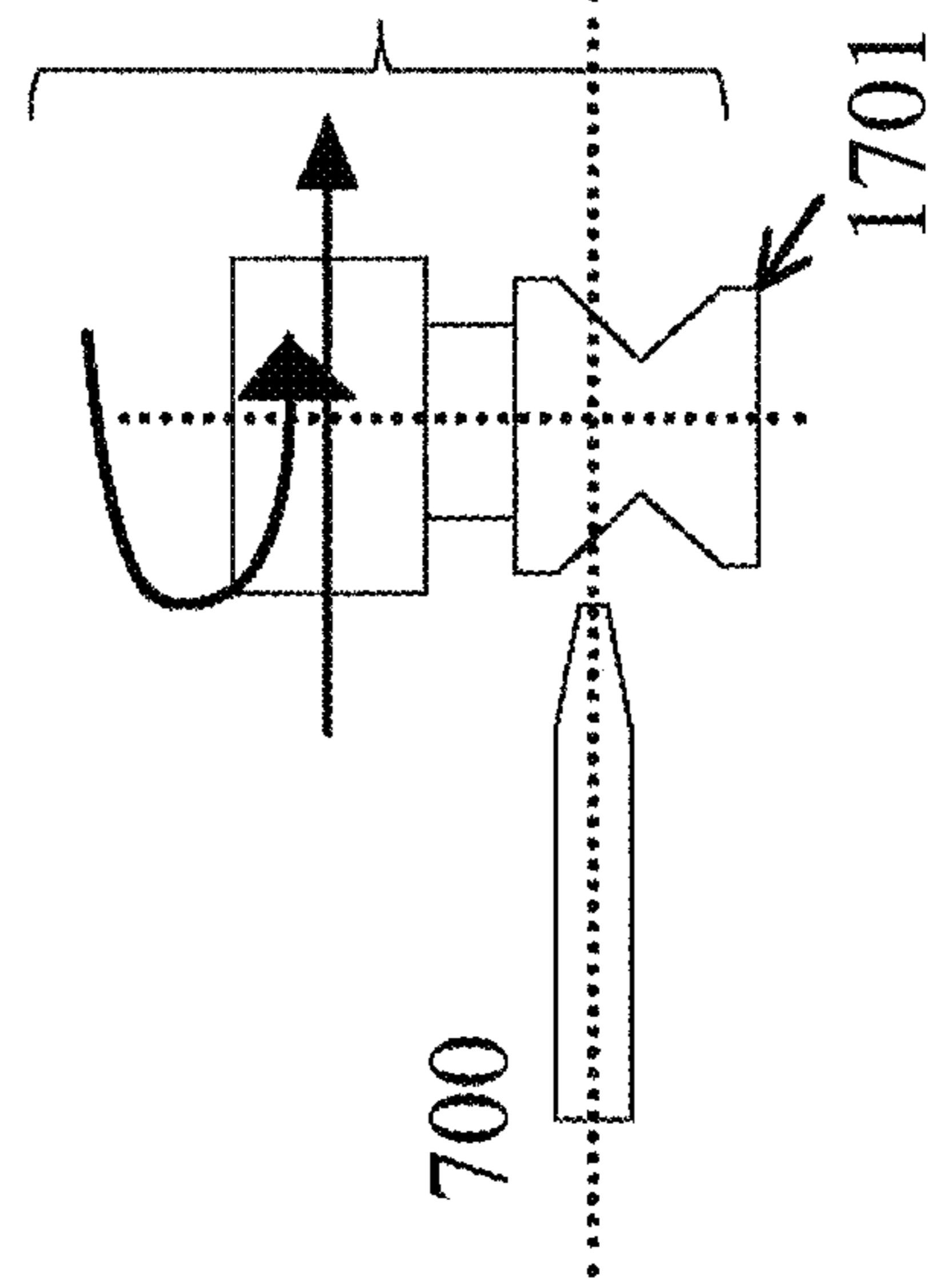


Figure 20

1**METHOD OF USING A POLISHING SYSTEM**

PRIORITY CLAIM

The present application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 15/652,436, filed Jul. 18, 2017, which is a divisional of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/706,506, filed Dec. 6, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,718,164, issued Aug. 1, 2017, which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND

Integrated circuits are typically fabricated on a semiconductor wafer, with many individual dies manufactured simultaneously on the same wafer. Processing steps are used to form layers of metal and dielectrics on the semiconductor wafer to define interconnect structures, as well as active and passive electronic devices. Many of the processing steps result in non-planar layers. However, it is often desirable for layers of the integrated circuit to have uniform thickness. Thus, polishing is required both to provide uniform thickness, and a smooth layer surface, which not only ensure device performance, but also aid subsequent processing steps.

Polishing techniques include mechanical planarization (MP) and chemical mechanical planarization/polishing (CMP). A typical CMP system will include a large polishing pad, on which a chemical slurry is introduced to facilitate wafer polishing, and a polishing head. To polish a semiconductor wafer, the semiconductor wafer is held by the polishing head, and the polishing head simultaneously applies a force to press the semiconductor wafer against the rotating polishing pad, while also rotating the semiconductor wafer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present embodiments, and the advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a diagram of a polishing system in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a top view of a polishing pad capable of translation and rotation in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIGS. 3A and 3B are top views of multiple polishing pads used in the polishing system in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 4 is a top view of a polishing pad including a cleaning sub-system in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 5 is a flowchart of a polishing process in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 6 is a diagram of a polishing system in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 7 is a diagram of a polishing head of the polishing system in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIGS. 8 to 13 are illustrations of wafer contours following completion of a first polishing process in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 14 is a detailed view of an auxiliary polishing system of FIG. 1 in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

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FIG. 15 is a flowchart of a full polishing process in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure;

FIG. 16 is a flowchart of a second polishing process in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure; and

FIGS. 17 to 20 are diagrams of an auxiliary bevel polishing unit performing bevel polishing in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

The making and using of the present embodiments are discussed in detail below. It should be appreciated, however, that the present disclosure provides many applicable inventive concepts that can be embodied in a wide variety of specific contexts. The specific embodiments discussed are merely illustrative of specific ways to make and use the disclosed subject matter, and do not limit the scope of the different embodiments.

Embodiments will be described with respect to a specific context, namely a polishing system and the like. Other embodiments may also be applied, however, to other polishing systems which are used to polish material surfaces.

Throughout the various figures and discussion, like reference numbers refer to like components. Also, although singular components may be depicted throughout some of the figures, this is for simplicity of illustration and ease of discussion. A person having ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that such discussion and depiction can be and usually is applicable for many components within a structure.

Polishing heads hold onto a circular semiconductor wafer by use of a retaining ring, and press the semiconductor wafer against a spinning polishing pad to planarize and/or polish a face of the semiconductor wafer. As the semiconductor wafer spins, due to the nature of angular motion, tangential velocity increases from the center of the semiconductor wafer to its edge. Thus, if the semiconductor wafer were pressed against the polishing pad by uniform pressure, edges of the semiconductor wafer would be polished more heavily than central regions. To address this issue, applicators are introduced in the polishing head to vary curvature of the semiconductor wafer during polishing, which compensates for the differences in tangential velocity over the radius of the semiconductor wafer. The applicators, which may include mechanical parts, such as springs or pistons, press against the semiconductor wafer to cause temporary curvature thereof. For various reasons, including aging, defects, and damage, the applicators do not perform as expected. As a result, the semiconductor wafer may exhibit uneven polishing after the polishing process is completed, which affects yield and throughput.

In the following disclosure, a novel polishing system is introduced, which uses a polishing pad having diameter smaller than the semiconductor wafer to achieve high uniformity when polishing the semiconductor wafer. In the polishing system disclosed herein, the semiconductor wafer may lie face-up on a table, while the polishing pad polishes the semiconductor wafer using a combination of a proper slurry and downward pressure. The polishing pad, being smaller than the semiconductor wafer, may sweep over the surface of the semiconductor wafer in a pattern that is programmable, or even adaptable based on in-line metrology.

ogy data. Multiple polishing pads may be used sequentially, simultaneously, or in a combination of the two to increase flexibility and throughput.

The polishing system also provides a cleaning operation that can be performed without removing the semiconductor wafer to a separate cleaning station. After any polishing operation, a cleaning operation may be performed to remove excess slurry, for example. In the polishing system disclosed herein, the cleaning operation may be performed by a roller brush in combination with distilled water or a cleaning agent, for example. With the semiconductor wafer still face-up on the table, the roller brush is lowered onto the semiconductor wafer to clean the semiconductor wafer. Following the cleaning operation, further polishing operations may be performed using the polishing pad disclosed herein without removing the semiconductor wafer from the table.

The polishing pad in some embodiments also acts as an auxiliary polishing pad(s) in a rework operation to polish the semiconductor wafer in certain regions, while leaving other regions of the semiconductor wafer unaffected. The polishing pad is smaller than the semiconductor wafer, and is controllable in three dimensions. Taking metrology data following a first polishing process on a main polishing pad having a diameter greater than that of the semiconductor wafer, a second polishing profile can be programmed into the polishing system, and the auxiliary polishing pad can be used in conjunction with a polishing head to rework the semiconductor wafer under process, without taking the semiconductor wafer offline from the polishing system. Multiple small auxiliary polishing pads can be used in conjunction with the polishing head to provide even greater polishing profile flexibility and throughput. In some embodiments, a bevel polishing pad is also used in conjunction with the polishing head to polish a bevel region of the semiconductor wafer.

FIG. 1 is a diagram of a polishing system 10 in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure. A wafer table 120 supports and optionally rotates a semiconductor wafer 200 (or simply "wafer 200") to be polished. A polishing pad 111 of a polishing head 110 polishes a front face 201 of the semiconductor wafer 200. Width w_2 (e.g., outer diameter) of the polishing pad 111 is shorter than width w_1 (e.g., outer diameter) of the semiconductor wafer 200. In some embodiments, a rotation control mechanism 121 controls rotation of the wafer 200, and a slurry delivery mechanism 122 mixes, stores and/or delivers chemical slurry to the front face 201 of the wafer 200 to enable chemical mechanical polishing (CMP). Metrology tools 130 read parameters of the wafer 200 before, during, and/or after polishing of the wafer 200 by the polishing system 10. A system controller 140 controls variables of the polishing process performed by the polishing system 10.

In some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer 200 includes an elementary semiconductor including silicon or germanium in crystal, polycrystalline, or an amorphous structure; a compound semiconductor including silicon carbide, gallium arsenic, gallium phosphide, indium phosphide, indium arsenide, and indium antimonide; an alloy semiconductor including SiGe, GaAsP, AlInAs, AlGaAs, GaInAs, GaInP, and GaInAsP; any other suitable material; or combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the alloy semiconductor has a gradient SiGe feature in which the Si and Ge composition change from one ratio at one location to another ratio at another location of the gradient SiGe feature. In some embodiments, the gradient SiGe feature is formed over a silicon substrate. In some embodiments, the gradient SiGe

feature is strained. Furthermore, in some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer 200 is a semiconductor on insulator, such as a silicon on insulator (SOI), or a thin film transistor (TFT). In some examples, the semiconductor wafer 200 includes a doped epitaxial layer or a buried layer. In other examples, the compound semiconductor wafer 200 has a multilayer structure, or the wafer 200 may include a multilayer compound semiconductor structure. In some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer 200 includes an epitaxial layer. For example, the wafer 200 has an epitaxial layer overlying a bulk semiconductor. Furthermore, in some embodiments, the wafer 200 includes a semiconductor-on-insulator (SOI) structure such as a buried dielectric layer. Alternatively, the wafer 200 includes a buried dielectric layer such as a buried oxide (BOX) layer, such as that formed by a method referred to as separation by implantation of oxygen (SIMOX) technology, wafer bonding, selective epitaxial growth (SEG), or other proper method.

In some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer 200 includes active and/or passive devices formed thereon and therein. For example, doped regions are formed in the semiconductor wafer 200 to define transistors. In some embodiments, dielectric and polysilicon layers are defined to form gates of the transistors. In some embodiments, additional metal and polysilicon layers are patterned to form interconnects between the active and/or passive devices in and on the semiconductor wafer 200. In some embodiments, other structures, such as through-substrate-vias (TSVs), post-passivation redistribution layers (PPI RDLs), and the like are also formed on the semiconductor wafer 200. The various devices and interconnect structures may primarily be formed on a front face 201 of the semiconductor wafer 200. In the polishing system 10, the front face 201 may face toward polishing head 110, while a back face of the semiconductor wafer 200 may face away from polishing head 110, and be in contact with the wafer table 120.

The wafer table 120 supports the wafer 200, and in some embodiments has a wafer contacting surface made of a material such as silica gel. For the wafer 200 having the width w_1 , the wafer table 120 may be of width greater than the width w_1 by at least 20 cm, for example. In some embodiments, the width w_1 is in a range of about 25 millimeters to about 450 millimeters. In some embodiments, the width w_1 exceeds 450 millimeters. Examples of the width w_1 include 300 millimeters and 450 millimeters.

The wafer table 120 may spin the semiconductor wafer 200 at a first rate and in a first direction. Spin variables of the semiconductor wafer 200, such as speed and direction, may be controlled by the rotation control mechanism 121. In some embodiments, the rotation control mechanism 121 is controlled by the system controller 140. In some embodiments, the rotation control mechanism 121 causes rotation of the semiconductor wafer 200 through an electric motor. In some embodiments, the electric motor is an alternating current (AC) motor, a direct current (DC) motor, a universal motor, or the like, and has fixed or variable speed. In some embodiments, the rotation control mechanism 121 includes electronics for setting the speed of the electric motor. In some embodiments, the electronics receive control signals from the system controller 140, and control the speed of the electric motor in response to the control signals. In some embodiments, the control signals are real-time speed indication signals, and/or a spin rate profile specifying rotation speeds of the semiconductor wafer 200 over time throughout a polishing process. Embodiments in which the rotation control mechanism 121 is optional are also contemplated

herein, for example when the semiconductor wafer **200** is not rotated during polishing, but is stationary on the wafer table **120**.

The polishing head **110** holds the polishing pad **111**, and is controllable by the system controller **140** to apply pressure to the wafer **200** through the polishing pad **111**. The system controller **140** is also capable of translating the polishing pad **111** through three dimensions as shown in FIG. **2**, and also rotating the polishing pad **111** at a second rate and in a second direction. The polishing head **110** is controllable by the system controller **140** (for example) to translate in the three dimensions relative to the front face **201**. Two dimensions are indicated by crossing arrows in FIG. **2**, with the third dimension being in and out of the figure, orthogonal to the axes depicted by the crossing arrows. In some embodiments, the polishing pad **111** spins at the second rate and in the second direction (clockwise or counterclockwise), which is the same or different than the first rate and the first direction of the wafer **200**. In some embodiments, the second rate is fixed or variable, and is programmable and/or adjustable based on in-line metrology feedback provided by the metrology tools **130**. In some embodiments, the second rate is set in real-time by the system controller **140**, and/or as a predefined profile specifying rotation rates and directions of the polishing pad **111** over time throughout the polishing process.

A polishing surface of the polishing pad **111** faces toward the front face **201** of the semiconductor wafer **200**. In some embodiments, the polishing pad **111** polishes the semiconductor wafer **200** through a combination of mechanical and chemical removal of layer material. In some embodiments, the polishing pad **111** is made of a polymer. The width w_2 of the polishing pad **111** is shorter than the width w_1 of the semiconductor wafer **200**. In some embodiments, the width w_2 is less than half the width w_1 . In some embodiments, the width w_2 is between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the width w_1 . In some embodiments, the polishing pad **111** is cylindrical in shape, with a circular cross-section relative to the plane of the front face of the wafer **200**. Other shapes for the cross-section of the polishing pad **111**, including ovals, rectangles, squares, and the like, are also contemplated herein.

In some embodiments, the slurry delivery mechanism **122** mixes, stores and/or delivers chemical slurry to the front face **201** of the wafer **200** to enable chemical mechanical polishing (CMP). In FIG. **1**, the slurry delivery mechanism **122** is shown as part of the wafer table **120**. In some embodiments, the slurry delivery mechanism **122** is part of the polishing head **110**. In some embodiments, the chemical slurry is applied to the wafer **200** through the wafer table **120**, and/or through the polishing pad **111**. For example, the chemical slurry is fed through a tube to the polishing pad **111** through the polishing head **110**. In some embodiments, the chemical slurry is also fed through a tube onto the front surface **201** of the wafer **200** through a tube of the wafer table **120**. In some embodiments, composition of the chemical slurry is controlled by the slurry delivery mechanism **122** according to a control signal generated by the system controller **140**. In some embodiments, the control signal provides real-time composition control parameters, and/or a predefined composition profile that is scheduled relative to the duration of the polishing process. In some embodiments, other slurry variables, such as flow rate, are also controlled by the slurry delivery mechanism **122** according to control signals generated by the system controller **140**, in real-time and/or in a predefined profile. In some embodiments, the various control signals related to slurry composition and other slurry variables are generated as preset values, and/or

in view of in-line metrology data gathered by the metrology tools **130** during the polishing process.

The metrology tools **130** provide metrology information to the system controller **140**, including topography of the front face **201** of the semiconductor wafer **200**, for example. Thicknesses and contours of films and materials on the face of the semiconductor wafer **200** are measured by the metrology tools **130**, and transmitted to the system controller **140**. The metrology tools **130** include a laser interferometer, for example. Based on the metrology information provided to the system controller **140**, in some embodiments, the system controller **140** controls various process variables during the polishing process. Examples of process variables controllable by the system controller **140** include rotation speeds and directions of the wafer **200** and the polishing pad **111**, location of the polishing head **110** over the wafer **200**, force applied by the polishing head **110** on the wafer **200**, and slurry pumping rate and/or slurry composition of the slurry delivery mechanism **122**. The use of the metrology tools **130** as described is referred to as intra-metrology closed loop control (IMCLC).

In some embodiments, a second polishing pad **112** is utilized in the polishing system **10** to increase throughput as shown in FIGS. **3A** and **3B**. In FIG. **3A**, according to some embodiments, the second polishing pad **112** and the polishing pad **111** are collinear along center lines thereof, and separated by a distance d_1 (e.g., as measured from center of pad **112** to center of pad **111**), which is about half the diameter w_1 of the semiconductor wafer **200**. FIG. **3B** shows a general case, in which positions of the polishing pads **111**, **112** are defined in radial coordinates. As such, the polishing pad **111** is located at a radius r_1 relative to the center of the wafer **200**, and the polishing pad **112** is located at a radius r_2 relative to the center of the wafer **200**. The radii r_1 , r_2 are further separated angularly by an offset angle θ . In the example shown in FIG. **3A**, the offset angle θ is 180 degrees. The variables d_1 , r_1 , r_2 , and θ are all controllable by the system controller **140**, and in some embodiments, are set in a predetermined polishing profile, and/or in a real-time response to the in-line metrology data provided by the metrology tools **130**.

In some embodiments, cleaning is performed between polishing stages, and includes use of brushes and cleaning agents (e.g., chemicals, deionized (DI) water). A cleaning unit **400** in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure is shown in FIG. **4**. In some embodiments, the cleaning unit **400** is a roller brush or disc brush, for example, and is configured to rotate and translate in at least one direction, as indicated by arrows to the right and above the cleaning unit **400** in FIG. **4**. In some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer **200** is held face up by the wafer table **120**, and is further rotated while the cleaning unit **400** clears chemical slurry and particles from the face of the semiconductor wafer **200**.

Based on the above, intermediate steps in a general polishing method **50** are shown in FIG. **5**. Described in terms of FIGS. **1-2**, **3A-3B**, and **4**, the polishing method **50** includes a first polishing process performed in block **500**, a first cleaning process performed in block **501**, a second polishing process performed in block **502**, and a second cleaning process performed in block **503**. It is understood that the second polishing and cleaning processes or the first polishing and cleaning processes are optional in some embodiments. Order of the blocks **500-503** may also be changed to form various embodiments, all of which are

contemplated herein. For example, blocks **502** and **503** are performed prior to blocks **500** and **501** in some embodiments.

One polishing head is used to polish the wafer **200** in block **500**. In some embodiments, the polishing head is of a first type (e.g., Type 1), and is used with a first chemical slurry (e.g., Type A). In some embodiments, a first profile **P1** is used that defines polishing speeds, polishing pressures, polishing positions, durations, slurry composition and flow rate, and the like, as described above.

Following block **500**, the first cleaning process is performed in block **501**. A first cleaner, such as a brush (e.g., Brush 1), is used with a first cleaning agent (e.g., Agent M) to clean the polished surface of the wafer **200** by the first cleaning process in block **501**. In some embodiments, the cleaning agent is selected in accordance with the chemical slurry used in block **500**. In some embodiments, a cleaning profile **C1** defines rotation speeds, positions, durations, flow rates, and the like to provide sufficient and/or optimal cleaning of the wafer **200**.

Two polishing heads are used in block **502**. In some embodiments, the polishing heads are the same or a different type (e.g., Type 2 and Type 3), and are used with a chemical slurry of a type (e.g., Type B) that is the same or different from the type of the chemical slurry used in the block **500**. In some embodiments, a second polishing profile **P2** is defined for use with the polishing heads and slurry of block **502**, which defines polishing rates, flow rates, polishing positions of the polishing heads (e.g., radii and angular separation), durations, pressures, and the like.

A second cleaning process is performed in block **503** to clear away residual slurry from the polishing process in block **502**. In some embodiments, a second cleaner (e.g., Brush 2) is used with a second cleaning agent (e.g., Agent N) in accordance with a second cleaning profile **C2** to remove the residual slurry. In some embodiments, the second cleaner is the same or different from the first cleaner, and cleaners other than brushes are also contemplated herein. In some embodiments, the second cleaning agent is the same or different from the first cleaning agent, and is selected in accordance with the chemical slurry used in block **502**. The cleaning profile **C2** may define rotation speeds, positions, durations, flow rates, and the like to provide sufficient and/or optimal cleaning of the wafer **200**.

In some embodiments, the cleaning processes in blocks **501** and **503** described above utilize the cleaning unit **400**. In some embodiments, the cleaning unit **400** is spun and lowered onto the semiconductor wafer **200** surface, and pressure is applied to the cleaning unit **400** toward the face of the semiconductor wafer **200**. In some embodiments, the cleaning unit **400** begins cleaning at an edge of the semiconductor wafer **200**, such as the bottom edge shown in FIG. 4, and is translated toward an opposite edge in a single direction, for example. Embodiments where the cleaning unit **400** is pivoted from one end thereof to swipe angularly across the face of the semiconductor wafer **200** are also contemplated herein. In some embodiments, a cleaning chemical solution and/or DI water is deposited on the face of the semiconductor wafer **200** to aid in removing all residue from the semiconductor wafer **200**.

The polishing system **10** using the polishing head **110** saves space over traditional polishing systems. The polishing pads **111**, **112** allow for numerous polishing profiles to be used, and in some embodiments are tied in with the in-line metrology data provided by the metrology tools **130** to provide automated profile adjustment without taking the semiconductor wafer **200** offline. The cleaning unit **400** in

the polishing system **10** also saves time, eliminating the need for offline cleaning stations. In some embodiments, the semiconductor wafer **200** is polished and cleaned in the same station, which saves space and greatly reduces wafer transfer time. The polishing system **10** saves space and time, and has flexible polishing profile control, which translates into an increase in both yield and throughput.

A polishing system **60** in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure is shown in FIG. 6. A main polishing pad **600** for polishing a wafer has a polishing face, which is made of polyurethane, for example. The main polishing pad **600** is rotated at a constant speed, or at a variable speed determined by a system controller **620**. The rotation is controlled by a motor **605** that drives the main polishing pad **600**, for example. The variable speed controlled based on a signal **622** sent to the motor **605** from the system controller **620**, and the motor **605** may vary the rotational speed of the main polishing pad **600** in response to the signal. The main polishing pad **600** may rotate in a clockwise direction or a counter-clockwise direction. The main polishing pad **600** is circular, for example, and has a diameter greater than a semiconductor wafer to be polished. In some embodiments, the diameter of the main polishing pad **600**, D_{PAD} , is at least two times as long as the diameter of the semiconductor wafer, D_{WAFER} . Exemplary main polishing pad diameter for a 450 mm semiconductor wafer is about 1094 mm (D_{PAD}/D_{WAFER} approximately 2.43), compared with main polishing pad diameter of about 762 mm for 300 mm wafers (D_{PAD}/D_{WAFER} approximately 2.54) and main polishing pad diameter of about 508 mm for 200 mm wafers (D_{PAD}/D_{WAFER} approximately 2.54).

A polishing head **610**, shown in detail in FIG. 7, presses a wafer **700**, such as a semiconductor wafer, against the main polishing pad **600**. The semiconductor wafer **700** has width $w1$ which is typically shorter than half width $w3$ of the main polishing pad **600**, as described above. The polishing head **610** has a retainer ring **614** installed in a frame **612** thereof. The retainer ring **614** is made of polyphenylene sulfide (PPS), polyether ether ketone (PEEK) or another suitable polyimide or thermoplastic material, and holds the semiconductor wafer **700** by an edge/bezel region of the semiconductor wafer **700**. In some embodiments, the polishing head **610** applies a general force on the semiconductor wafer **700** toward the main polishing pad **600**. Applicators **615-618** provide localized pressure at various regions of the semiconductor wafer **700** to change the contour of the semiconductor wafer **700**, and control polishing rates of the various regions of the semiconductor wafer **700**. The applicator **615** applies pressure to a center zone of the semiconductor wafer **700**, the applicator **616** applies pressure to a ripple zone of the semiconductor wafer **700**, the applicator **617** applies pressure to an outer zone of the semiconductor wafer **700**, and the applicator **618** applies pressure to an edge zone of the semiconductor wafer **700**, as shown in FIG. 7. The pressures applied are mechanical, pneumatic, fluid, or the like, and are controllable by the system controller **620**.

In some embodiments, in addition to pressing the semiconductor wafer **700** against the main polishing pad **600**, the polishing head **610** further rotates in a direction the same or opposite that of the main polishing pad **600**. In some embodiments, the main polishing pad **600** rotates clockwise, while the polishing head **610** rotates counterclockwise, for example. In some embodiments, the main polishing pad **600** rotates clockwise, while the polishing head **610** also rotates clockwise. In some embodiments, rotation of the polishing head **610** is controlled by a motor **670** that drives the polishing head **610**. In some embodiments, the motor **670**

rotates the polishing head **610** at a constant speed, or at a variable speed controllable by the system controller **620**. In some embodiments, the polishing head **610** is also subject to translation in a plane coplanar to the face of the main polishing pad **600**. In some embodiments, the translation is

controllable by the system controller **620**, and is programmed into the polishing system **60** as part of a predefined polishing profile. In some embodiments, the polishing system **60** is a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) system, for example. In some embodiments, a slurry delivery system **640** releases a chemical slurry onto the main polishing pad **600** surface at a constant rate, or a variable rate determined by the system controller **620**. In some embodiments, the slurry delivery system **640** includes a pump, and a tube installed in the main polishing pad **600**. In some embodiments, the chemical slurry includes silica solids, chemical dispersants, surfactants, and the like. In some embodiments, composition of the chemical slurry is also controllable by the system controller **620**. In some embodiments, the system controller **620** controls slurry delivery parameters, such as delivery rate and slurry composition through a signal **623**.

Metrology tools **630** provide metrology information to the system controller **620**, including topography of the face of the semiconductor wafer **700**, for example. Thicknesses and contours of films and materials on the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** are measured by the metrology tools **630**, and transmitted to the system controller **620**. The metrology tools **630** include a laser interferometer, for example. In some embodiments, based on the metrology information provided to the system controller **620**, the system controller **620** controls rotation speeds of the main polishing pad **600** and the polishing head **610**, location of the polishing head **610** over the main polishing pad **600**, force applied by the polishing head **610**, pressure levels of the applicators **615-618**, and slurry pumping rate and/or slurry composition of the slurry delivery system **640**. The use of the metrology tools **630** as described is referred to as intra-metrology closed loop control (IMCLC).

The system controller **620** controls the main polishing pad **600**, the polishing head **610**, and the slurry delivery system **640** to perform a first polishing process. In some embodiments, the first polishing process is based on a first predefined polishing profile, which specifies polishing time, as well as polishing variables including, but not limited to, rotation speeds of the main polishing pad **600** and the polishing head **610**, translation of the polishing head **610**, force of the polishing head **610**, regional pressure levels of the applicators **615-618**, and slurry rate and composition variables of the slurry delivery system **640** as a function of time. In some embodiments, rotation speed of the polishing head **610** varies over the duration of the first polishing process. In some embodiments, a path is set for the polishing head **610** to use the entire area of the main polishing pad **600** through the first polishing process, for example. In some embodiments, the first polishing process is adaptive, making use of the IMCLC to control the polishing variables in response to metrology metrics including, but not limited to, layer thickness and layer smoothness.

Upon completion of the first polishing process, metrology data provided by the metrology tools **630** may indicate that at least one zone of the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** under process is not evenly polished. FIGS. **8-13** are illustrations of wafer contours **711-716** following completion of the first polishing process. In FIG. **8**, a central region of the semiconductor wafer **700** is polished less, e.g. has greater layer thickness, than outer and edge regions of the semi-

conductor wafer **700**. This may indicate that the applicator **615** is defective, damaged, aging, or requires maintenance. In FIG. **9**, the semiconductor wafer contour **712** may indicate that the ring zone of the semiconductor wafer **700** is underpolished relative to other zones of the semiconductor wafer **700**. The applicator **616** is defective, damaged, aging, or require maintenance, for example. The semiconductor wafer contours **713** and **714** in FIG. **10** and FIG. **11**, respectively, indicate underpolishing in the outer zone and the edge zone, which may correspond to improper function of the applicators **617** and **618**. The semiconductor wafer contour **715** in FIG. **12** corresponds to underpolishing in two zones, such as the ring zone and the edge zone. Other two-zone contours may include underpolishing in the center zone and the outer zone, and underpolishing in the center zone and the edge zone. A wafer contour **716** shown in FIG. **13** corresponds to a case in which at least one area of the semiconductor wafer **700** has, for example, higher thickness than originally programmed into the polishing system **60** for the first polishing process. The high thickness(es) is die localized in FIG. **13**, affecting, for example, a single die, or at least two adjacent dies located in a roughly circular or other shaped region that is non-concentric to the semiconductor wafer **700**.

An auxiliary polishing system **650** installed in the polishing system **60** is shown in FIG. **6**, and a detailed view thereof is shown in FIG. **14**. In some embodiments, the polishing head **610** serves dual purposes in the polishing system **60**. In the first polishing process (main polishing process), the polishing head **610** holds the semiconductor wafer **700**, presses the semiconductor wafer **700** against the main polishing pad **600**, spins the semiconductor wafer **700**, translates the semiconductor wafer **700** over the face of the main polishing pad **600**, and performs zone polish control through the applicators **615-618**. In a second polishing process (auxiliary polishing process), as part of the auxiliary polishing system **650**, the polishing head **610** acts as a table holding the semiconductor wafer **700** toward auxiliary polishing units **651** and **652**, while at least one auxiliary polishing unit **651**, **652**, polishes at least one zone and/or at least one area of the semiconductor wafer **700**. In the second polishing process, the polishing head **610** holds the semiconductor wafer **700**, spins the semiconductor wafer **700**, and/or translates the semiconductor wafer **700** in three dimensions.

Two auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** are shown in FIG. **14**. Embodiments including only one, two, three, or more than three auxiliary polishing units are contemplated herein. An auxiliary polishing pad **653** of the auxiliary polishing unit **651** is attached to an axle **654**, which is attached to an auxiliary controller **655**. In some embodiments, a polishing surface of the auxiliary polishing pad **653** includes material similar to the material of the main polishing pad **600**, such as polyurethane. A polishing surface of the auxiliary polishing pad **653** is circular, for example. Width of the polishing surface of the auxiliary polishing pad **653**, which may also be diameter for a circular shape, is indicated as width **w2** in FIG. **14**. The width **w2** of the polishing surface of the auxiliary polishing pad **653** is shorter than the width **w1** of the semiconductor wafer **700**. The width **w2** is shorter than about half the width **w1**, for example. The width **w2** is between about $\frac{1}{4}$ to about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the width **w1**, or even shorter than about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the width **w1**. Width of a polishing face of a second auxiliary polishing pad **657** of the auxiliary polishing unit **652**, which may also be diameter for a circular shape, is indicated as width **w4** in FIG. **14**. The width **w4** is shorter than the width **w1** of the semiconductor wafer **700**,

and in some embodiments is about the same as the width w_2 . In some embodiments, the width w_4 is different from the width w_2 of the auxiliary polishing pad **653**. In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing pad **657** has the same shape as, or a different shape than, the auxiliary polishing pad **653**. In some embodiments, polishing surfaces of the auxiliary polishing pads **653**, **657**, which are affected by polishing material and/or texturing, are the same or different.

In some embodiments, the auxiliary controller **655**, which controls the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** to perform the second polishing process, includes electronics, and electrical and mechanical systems for controlling rotation of the axles **654**, **658** and the auxiliary polishing pads **653**, **657** and for controlling translation of the axles **654**, **658** and the auxiliary polishing pads **653**, **657** in three dimensions before, during, and after the second polishing process. In some embodiments, the auxiliary controller **655** includes motors for spinning the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652**. In some embodiments, the motors are controlled electronically to spin at variable and/or constant speeds before, during, and after the second polishing process. In some embodiments, the auxiliary controller **655** further includes levers and/or pistons for applying downward force on the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** to apply pressure on the zone(s) and/or area(s) to be polished in the second polishing process.

A signal line (or bus) **661** electrically connects the auxiliary controller **655** to the metrology tools **630**, so that the auxiliary controller **655** automatically translates metrology data (layer thickness, contour profile) of the semiconductor wafer **700** into polishing steps of the second polishing process. Configurations in which the auxiliary controller **655** is electrically connected to the system controller **620** are also contemplated herein. In some embodiments, the system controller **620** interprets the metrology data from the metrology tools **630**, and sends polishing commands to the auxiliary controller **655**, such that the auxiliary controller **655** need not be directly electrically connected to the metrology tools **630** to perform the second polishing process. In such a configuration, in some embodiments, the auxiliary controller **655** does not include interpreter hardware and/or software for intelligently handling feedback data from the metrology tools **630**, but relies on the system controller **620** for polishing variables, such as spin rates, pressures, stutter rates, and/or displacements and paths for the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652**. In some embodiments, the system controller **620** includes hardware (e.g., a processor, memory, logic circuits, and the like).

For a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) system, the second polishing process includes introduction of a chemical slurry, such as that described above, on the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** under process. The chemical slurry is introduced in various ways. As one example, an auxiliary slurry delivery system **670** shown in phantom in FIG. **14** may deliver the chemical slurry to the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** through a tube and a pump. In some embodiments, the auxiliary slurry delivery system **670** is installed in and through the polishing head **610**, with evenly spaced outlets along a radius of the face of the polishing head **610**, for example. Another slurry delivery system is integral to the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652**, where the chemical slurry is delivered into the auxiliary polishing pads **653**, **657** through tubes **656**, **659**, for example. In some embodiments, the two delivery systems are used individually or in conjunction to introduce the chemical slurry onto the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** during polishing of the zone(s) and/or area(s) in the second polishing process. In some embodiments, the auxil-

ary controller **655** is configured to control slurry variables, including delivery rate(s), slurry mix ratios, and the like of the chemical slurry delivered by any or all of the delivery systems **670**, **656**, and **659** described herein. In some embodiments, the slurry variables are controlled by the system controller **620**, for example.

In some embodiments, the polishing head **610** is configured to be rotated, so that the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** under process can face away from the main polishing pad **600** during the second polishing process. For example, the polishing head **610** is rotated 180 degrees, so that the polishing head **610** is inverted relative to its original position during the first polishing process. Other angles of rotation are also contemplated, such as 90 degrees clockwise or counterclockwise. In some embodiments, a first positioning mechanism **680** (FIG. **6**) rotates the polishing head **610** away from the main polishing pad **600**, for example, so that the polishing head **610** faces up. In some embodiments, the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** after rotating the polishing head **610** away from the main polishing pad **600** has substantially the same orientation as the face of the main polishing pad **600**. In some embodiments, the face of the polishing head **610** is oriented in such a way that a surface normal (normal vector) thereof is substantially parallel to and opposite the direction of gravity, for example. Orientations at a slight tilt from parallel are also contemplated, which may aid drainage of chemical slurry from the semiconductor wafer **700**.

In some embodiments, the polishing head **610** is further rotated and/or translated away from the main polishing pad **600**, such that the polishing head **610** is not directly above the main polishing pad **600**. In some embodiments, the translating is performed by the first positioning mechanism **680**, and the rotating is performed by a second positioning mechanism **690** connected to the first positioning mechanism **680** according to a signal **621**, for example. Moving the polishing head **610** away from the main polishing pad **600** allows the main polishing pad **600** to continue processing subsequent wafers under precise slurry volume control without excess slurry dripping onto the main polishing pad **600** from above as the polishing head **610** is involved in the second polishing process. Configurations in which multiple polishing heads **610** are included in the polishing system **60** to accommodate for a higher numbers of wafers under process are contemplated herein. Whereas a traditional polishing system may include three polishing pads and three polishing heads, for example, a polishing system similar to the polishing system **60** may include three polishing pads and six polishing heads, so as not to reduce throughput as each wafer is polished twice.

Embodiments in which the auxiliary polishing system **650** includes the cleaning sub-system **400** shown in FIG. **4** are also contemplated herein.

Flowcharts of a full polishing process **1500** and a second polishing process **1600** in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure are shown in FIG. **15** and FIG. **16**, respectively. The semiconductor wafer **700** is initially polished using a first polishing profile in block **1510**, which is considered a first polishing process by a first polishing pad having a width greater than the semiconductor wafer **700**. The first polishing process is completed using the polishing head **610** and the main polishing pad **600**, as described above. The semiconductor wafer **700** is then transferred to an auxiliary polishing system, such as the auxiliary polishing system **650** shown in FIG. **6** and FIG. **14**, in block **1520**. An auxiliary polishing pad, such as the auxiliary polishing pad **653** of the auxiliary polishing unit

651 shown in FIG. **14** is used to polish the semiconductor wafer **700** according to a second polishing profile in block **1530**, which is considered a second polishing process by an auxiliary polishing pad having a width less than the semiconductor wafer **700**.

In some embodiments, the second polishing process **1600** shown in FIG. **16** is the same as the block **1530** in FIG. **15**. In some embodiments, the second polishing process **1600** shown in FIG. **16** begins after completing the first polishing process, and transferring the semiconductor wafer **700** to the auxiliary polishing system **650** in block **1520**, for example. In some embodiments, metrology data, such as the metrology data generated by the metrology tools **630** shown in FIG. **6** is received by the system controller **620** and/or the auxiliary controller **655** in block **1610**. In some embodiments, the metrology data is received after completion of the first polishing process. In accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure, the metrology data is received at any time during the full polishing process **1500**, such as during the first polishing process, or during the transferring of the semiconductor wafer **700** to the auxiliary polishing system **650**. As described above, in some embodiments, the metrology data includes characteristics including layer thickness contours, and/or layer roughness data. In some embodiments, the characteristics are mapped to coordinates of the semiconductor wafer **700**.

In block **1620**, the received metrology data is analyzed to determine improperly polished regions of the semiconductor wafer **700**. In some embodiments, the improperly polished regions exhibit thickness and/or surface texture that differs from expected thickness and/or texture programmed into the first predefined polishing profile. In some embodiments, using standard techniques, such as edge detection, the improperly polished regions of the semiconductor wafer **700** is determined. In some embodiments, the metrology data is pixel-level data, such that the improperly polished regions is pixel-sized at a finest granularity. Using image processing techniques, the pixel-sized regions are grouped into larger regions in some embodiments, such as the ring zones described in reference to FIGS. **8-12**, or the localized areas shown in FIG. **13**. As an example, a ring zone is loosely defined by an inner radius and an outer radius. Then, a central radius, or track, is obtained by averaging the inner and outer radii, for example. Width of the track is obtained by subtracting the inner radius from the outer radius, for example. Thus, on a 300 mm wafer, a track of width about 40 mm and center radius about 90 mm is found corresponding to an inner radius of about 70 mm and an outer radius of about 110 mm, as only one example. In some embodiments, the track corresponds to one or more of the applicators **615-618**, such as the outer zone applicator **617**, for example.

In some embodiments, the improperly polished region(s) has defined shape and contour, and a second predefined polishing profile is generated accordingly in block **1630** to improve planarity and/or surface smoothness uniformity over the semiconductor wafer **700** surface. Taking again the example of a ring zone, having found a track width and center radius of the ring zone, a second polishing profile that defines position of the auxiliary polishing pad, applied pressure(s), and/or polishing time and the like is generated to planarize and/or smooth the improperly polished ring zone.

In accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure, auxiliary polishing pads of the auxiliary polishing system **650** have different sizes. For example, auxiliary polishing pad widths range from about 25 mm to about 100 mm. In some embodiments, the track width is taken into

consideration when selecting the auxiliary polishing pad. Using the previous example of a track width of 40 mm, an auxiliary polishing pad of width greater than 40 mm and shorter than about 70 mm is selected manually or automatically as part of the second polishing profile. In some embodiments, auxiliary polishing pads of the auxiliary polishing system **650** all have the same size, and no selection based on pad size, either automatic or manual, need be performed. Embodiments in which the auxiliary polishing pads have different polishing surfaces, such as different polishing materials, and are selectable according to polishing material defined in the desired second polishing profile, are also contemplated herein.

Using the second polishing profile generated according to block **1630** of FIG. **16**, in some embodiments the auxiliary polishing system **650** polishes the improperly polished region(s) in block **1640**. To polish the semiconductor wafer **700**, the auxiliary polishing system **650** spins the semiconductor wafer **700** and spins the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **653**, **657**. The auxiliary polishing system **650** further positions the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **653**, **657** over the improperly polished region(s), and lowers the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **653**, **657** until contact is made with the semiconductor wafer **700**. Chemical slurry is applied, and/or pressure is varied between the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **653**, **657** and the semiconductor wafer **700**. The above steps are not necessarily performed in the order described. In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing system **650** holds the semiconductor wafer **700** while the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **653**, **657** polish the semiconductor wafer **700**. For the localized areas shown in FIG. **13**, holding the semiconductor wafer **700** stationary is preferable, and the auxiliary polishing pads **653**, **657** are positioned over centers of the localized areas, or are translated in patterns to provide uniform polishing coverage over the localized areas. For two or more improperly polished regions, the improperly polished regions are polished simultaneously, sequentially, or a combination of the two (for three or more improperly polished regions).

In some embodiments, the localized areas in FIG. **13** are polished while the semiconductor wafer **700** is spinning. Knowing the spin rate of the semiconductor wafer **700**, radii corresponding to centers of the localized areas, and radial lengths of the localized areas, stutter frequencies are calculated, such that the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **651**, **652** remain mostly stationary, and apply short bursts of pressure as the localized area(s) pass by the auxiliary polishing pad(s) **651**, **652**. For example, if an improperly polished area has a center located at an 80 mm radius from the center of the semiconductor wafer **700**, and average radius of 15 mm, and the semiconductor wafer **700** is spun at 60 revolutions per minute (rpm), the improperly polished area passes the auxiliary polishing pad **651** (for example) once per second. The auxiliary polishing pad **651** is then lowered and raised with a stutter frequency of 1 Hz. Contact time for each pulse in which the auxiliary polishing pad **651** is applied pressure to polish the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** is set in various manners, including time required for the improperly polished area to pass the area of the auxiliary polishing pad **651**. If radius of the auxiliary polishing pad **651** is about 25 mm, time for the improperly polished area to pass through the length of the auxiliary polishing pad is approximated to about D_{PAD}/V_{CENTER} , where D_{PAD} is diameter of the auxiliary polishing pad **651** (50 mm in the example given), and V_{CENTER} is linear velocity of the center of the improperly polished area. In the example given, D_{PAD} is 50 mm (25

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mm²), and V_{CENTER} is about 503 mm/s ($2*\pi*80$ mm/s), which gives a pulse width of approximately $\frac{1}{10}$ second, or 100 milliseconds.

The second polishing process **1600** is performed as part of the full polishing process **1500**, as described above. In accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure, the second polishing process **1600** is performed independently, for example as part of a batch rework system, where the metrology data is saved in a server or portable storage medium, for example, and downloaded from the server during rework (the second polishing process) of the semiconductor wafer **700**. In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing system **650** is part of the polishing system **60**. In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing system **650** is an independent polishing system, such as a rework station, for example. In such an independent polishing system, a polishing head similar to the polishing head **610** is utilized to hold the semiconductor wafer **700**. In some embodiments, a wafer table is utilized to hold the semiconductor wafer **700** while auxiliary polishing units similar to the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** perform a second polishing process on the semiconductor wafer **700**. This type of configuration is appropriate when the semiconductor wafer **700** is to be taken offline prior to undergoing the second polishing process.

In FIGS. **6** and **14**, the polishing head **610** is shown facing up, while the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** face down. Embodiments in which the polishing head **610** faces down, while the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** face up are also contemplated herein. In this configuration, the polishing head **610** lifts the semiconductor wafer **700** from the main polishing pad **600**, translates the semiconductor wafer **700** to a position over the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652**, and lowers the semiconductor wafer **700** and/or raises the auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** to make contact and polish the semiconductor wafer **700** through the second polishing process described above. No rotation of the polishing head **610** is required in such a configuration.

Embodiments where the polishing system **60** does not include the main polishing pad **600** and the auxiliary polishing system **650** polishes the entire face of the semiconductor wafer **700** are contemplated herein. In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing pad **651** has a width similar to the width of the semiconductor wafer **700**, for example. Then, block **1510** of FIG. **15** is modified to use the auxiliary polishing pad **651** having the width similar to the width of the semiconductor wafer **700**. Block **1520** is removed from the full polishing process **1500**, and a second auxiliary polishing pad, such as the auxiliary polishing pad **652**, having width shorter than the width of the semiconductor wafer **700** is used to polish the semiconductor wafer **700** using the second predefined polishing profile.

In some embodiments, the auxiliary polishing system **650** is also used as a bevel polisher in accordance with various embodiments of the present disclosure. An auxiliary bevel polishing unit **1700** and bevel polishing scheme are depicted in FIGS. **17** to **20**. The auxiliary bevel polishing unit **1700** includes a bevel polishing pad **1701**. To polish a bevel region **701** of the semiconductor wafer **700**, the auxiliary bevel polishing unit **1700** spins the bevel polishing pad **1701** as shown in FIG. **17**. The spinning bevel polishing pad **1701** is translated toward the semiconductor wafer **700** to make contact with the bevel region **701** as shown in FIG. **18**. In some embodiments, a lower inclined portion of the bevel polishing pad **1701** having a first angle θ_1 relative to the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** polishes the bevel region **701** first. Subsequently, as shown in FIG. **19**, the bevel

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polishing pad **1701** is translated downward, such that an upper inclined portion of the bevel polishing pad **1701** having a second angle θ_2 relative to the face of the semiconductor wafer **700** polishes the bevel region **701**. In some embodiments, the bevel polishing pad **1701** is moved toward the center of the semiconductor wafer **700** to bring the bevel region **701** of the semiconductor wafer **700** back to the meeting point of the upper and lower inclined portions, then moved up to polish the bevel region **701** by the lower inclined portion again. In some embodiments, these steps are iterated prior to translating the bevel polishing pad **1701** away from the semiconductor wafer **700** as shown in FIG. **20**. Embodiments where the bevel polishing pad **1701** and the auxiliary polishing pad **651** are the same pad are also contemplated herein. For example, a downward-facing surface of the auxiliary polishing pad **651** polishes the face of the semiconductor wafer **700**, and a side surface of the same auxiliary polishing pad **651** polishes the bevel of the semiconductor wafer **700**.

The polishing system **60** including the auxiliary polishing system **650**, by using the polishing head **610** as a portable wafer table, saves space and rework time over traditional polishing systems. The auxiliary polishing units **651**, **652** of the auxiliary polishing system **650** allow for numerous polishing profiles to be used, and can be tied in with the metrology data provided by the metrology tools **630** to provide automated, in line rework without taking the semiconductor wafer **700** offline. The auxiliary bevel polishing unit **1200** and the cleaning unit **1600** in the auxiliary polishing system **650** also save time, eliminating the need for offline bevel polishing and cleaning stations. The semiconductor wafer **700** can be polished, bevel polished, and cleaned in the same station, which saves space and greatly reduces wafer transfer time. The polishing system **60** saves space and time, and has flexible polishing profile control, which translates into an increase in both yield and throughput.

An aspect of the present disclosure relates to a method of using a polishing system. The method includes securing a wafer to a support, wherein the wafer has a first diameter. The method further includes polishing the wafer using a first polishing pad rotating about a first axis, wherein the first polishing pad has a second diameter greater than the first diameter. The method further includes rotating the support about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis after polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad. The method further includes polishing the wafer using a second polishing pad after rotating the support, wherein the second polishing pad has a third diameter less than the first diameter. The method further includes releasing the wafer from the support following polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad having the third diameter shorter than or equal to about one quarter the second diameter. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad includes moving the first polishing pad in three dimensions relative to a surface of the semiconductor wafer. In some embodiments, the method further includes introducing a slurry onto the first polishing pad. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing a ring region approximately concentric to the wafer and having an outer radius shorter than an outer radius of the wafer. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the first polishing

pad includes polishing a first region of the wafer; polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing a second region of the wafer; and the first region and the second region are non-overlapping. In some embodiments, the method further includes cleaning the wafer following the polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad. In some embodiments, the method further includes polishing the wafer using a third polishing pad, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing a second region of the wafer, polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad includes polishing a third region of the wafer, and the third region and the second region are non-overlapping. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad includes polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad simultaneously with polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad.

An aspect of this description relates to a method of using a polishing system. The method includes polishing a first region of a wafer using a first polishing pad rotating about a first axis. The method further includes measuring a thickness profile of the wafer. The method further includes determining a second region of the wafer based on the measured thickness profile. The method further includes rotating the wafer about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis. The method further includes polishing the second region using a second polishing pad after rotating the wafer about the second axis, wherein the second polishing pad has a diameter less than a diameter of the first polishing pad. In some embodiments, measuring the thickness profile includes measuring the thickness profile using a laser interferometer. In some embodiments, rotating the wafer about the second axis includes rotating the wafer 180-degrees about the second axis. In some embodiments, measuring the thickness profile includes measuring the thickness profile after polishing the wafer with the first polishing pad. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer with the second polishing pad includes polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads.

An aspect of this description includes a method of using a polishing system. The method includes securing a wafer to a wafer support. The method further includes bringing the wafer into contact with a first polishing pad. The method further includes polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad rotating about a first axis. The method further includes bringing the wafer into contact with a second polishing pad, wherein bringing the wafer into contact with the second polishing pad includes rotating the polished wafer about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis. The method further includes polishing the rotated wafer using the second polishing pad. In some embodiments, the method further includes supplying a slurry from a slurry delivery system to the first polishing pad. In some embodiments, the method further includes measuring a thickness profile of the wafer prior to bringing the wafer into contact with the second polishing pad. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad includes polishing a region of the wafer determined based on the measured thickness profile. In some embodiments, polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads.

Although the present embodiments and their advantages have been described in detail, it should be understood that various changes, substitutions, and alterations can be made herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure as defined by the appended claims. Moreover, the scope of the present application is not intended to be limited to the particular embodiments of the process, machine,

manufacture, composition of matter, means, methods, and steps described in the specification. As one of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate from the disclosure, processes, machines, manufacture, compositions of matter, means, methods, or steps, presently existing or later to be developed, that perform substantially the same function or achieve substantially the same result as the corresponding embodiments described herein may be utilized according to the present disclosure. Accordingly, the appended claims are intended to include within their scope such processes, machines, manufacture, compositions of matter, means, methods, or steps.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of using a polishing system, the method comprising:

securing a wafer to a support, wherein the wafer has a first diameter;

polishing the wafer using a first polishing pad rotating about a first axis, wherein the first polishing pad has a second diameter greater than the first diameter;

rotating the support about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis after polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad;

polishing the wafer using a second polishing pad after rotating the support, wherein the second polishing pad has a third diameter less than the first diameter; and releasing the wafer from the support following polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad having the third diameter shorter than or equal to about one quarter the second diameter.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad comprises moving the first polishing pad in three dimensions relative to a surface of the semiconductor wafer.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising: introducing a slurry onto the first polishing pad.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing a ring region approximately concentric to the wafer and having an outer radius shorter than an outer radius of the wafer.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein: polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad comprises polishing a first region of the wafer, and polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing a second region of the wafer.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising cleaning the wafer following the polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising polishing the wafer using a third polishing pad, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing a second region of the wafer, polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad comprises polishing a third region of the wafer, and the third region and the second region are non-overlapping.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using the third polishing pad simultaneously with polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad.

11. A method of using a polishing system, the method comprising:

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polishing a first region of a wafer using a first polishing pad rotating about a first axis;
 measuring a thickness profile of the wafer;
 determining a second region of the wafer based on the measured thickness profile;
 rotating the wafer about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis; and
 polishing the second region using a second polishing pad after rotating the wafer about the second axis, wherein the second polishing pad has a diameter less than a diameter of the first polishing pad.

12. The method of claim **11**, wherein measuring the thickness profile comprises measuring the thickness profile using a laser interferometer.

13. The method of claim **11**, wherein rotating the wafer about the second axis comprises rotating the wafer 180-degrees about the second axis.

14. The method of claim **11**, wherein measuring the thickness profile comprises measuring the thickness profile after polishing the wafer with the first polishing pad.

15. The method of claim **11**, wherein polishing the wafer with the second polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads.

16. A method of using a polishing system, the method comprising:

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securing a wafer to a wafer support;
 bringing the wafer into contact with a first polishing pad;
 polishing the wafer using the first polishing pad rotating about a first axis;
 bringing the wafer into contact with a second polishing pad, wherein bringing the wafer into contact with the second polishing pad comprises rotating the polished wafer about a second axis perpendicular to the first axis;
 polishing the rotated wafer using the second polishing pad.

17. The method of claim **16**, wherein supplying a slurry from a slurry delivery system to the first polishing pad.

18. The method of claim **16**, further comprising measuring a thickness profile of the wafer prior to bringing the wafer into contact with the second polishing pad.

19. The method of claim **18**, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing a region of the wafer determined based on the measured thickness profile.

20. The method of claim **16**, wherein polishing the wafer using the second polishing pad comprises polishing the wafer using a plurality of second polishing pads.

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